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THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
ROBERT BURNS.



Peggy dear the evening's clear,
Thick then the skimming swallow,
The sky is blue the fields are green
All full of roses and yellow

THE COMPLETE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
ROBERT BURNS:
WITH
EXPLANATORY AND GLOSSARIAL NOTES;
AND A
LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,
BY JAMES CURRIE, M. D.

NEW YORK:
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M DCCC LIX.

ADVERTISEMENT.

IN the present day it would be a superfluous task to eulogize the poetry of Burns. No sooner had he given utterance to his exquisite strains, than they found an echo in the palace and the cottage. Men heard in them the voice of a master-poet—of one of those great minds who exercise an influence on the manners and sentiments of a people; and even before he died, his country did honor to his surpassing genius, and inscribed his name as the greatest of her minstrels, an award which has been continued with increasing reverence to the present day. And though other poets should arise to divide the national homage, still every succeeding age will continue to admire the truth and beauty of his sentiments and descriptions, upon the same principle that they will admire the simple manners and romantic scenery by which his inspiration was kindled, and which his patriotic heart loved to celebrate. To be dead to the poetry of Burns, is to be dead to Nature itself.

In reprinting the poetical works of one so distinguished in British literature, the Publishers considered it their duty to collate the various editions of his works, and to collect together the various poems which are the admitted productions of Burns, so as to render the present edition more complete than even the most expensive. The whole has been carefully revised,

and edited by one of our most talented living authors of Scottish Song; and to make the dialect and allusions fully accessible to English readers, glossarial definitions, and notes illustrative of the manners and customs which are described, have been added—not heaped together at the end, to fatigue the patience of the reader by a continual reference to the vocabulary, but subjoined to their respective pages, where they can be seen at a glance, in connection with the text. In addition to these, the Life of the Author, by the late Dr. Currie, of Liverpool, whose account, notwithstanding the numerous biographies of the poet which have been published, has never been surpassed, has been prefixed; and although it has been considerably abridged, still few particulars of any importance have been omitted. These advantages, combined with elegance and economy, will, it is hoped, secure a favorable reception for this edition of Burns's Poems, not only among his countrymen, but the public at large.

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LIFE OF BURNS.

BY JAMES CURRIE, M.D.

ABRIDGED.

ROBERT BURNS was born on the 29th day of January, 1759, in a small house about two miles from the town of Ayr, and within a few hundred yards of Alloway Church, which his poem of *Tam o' Shanter* has rendered immortal.* The name, which the poet and his brother modernized into Burns, was originally Burnes, or Burness. Their father, William Burnes, was the son of a farmer in Kincardineshire, and had received the education common in Scotland to persons in his condition of life; he could read and write, and had some knowledge of arithmetic. His family having fallen into reduced circumstances, he was compelled to leave his home in his nineteenth year, and turned his steps towards the south in quest of a livelihood. He undertook to act as a gardener, and shaped his course to Edinburgh, where he wrought hard when he could obtain employment, passing through a variety of difficulties. From Edinburgh William Burnes passed westward into the county of Ayr, where he engaged himself as a gardener to the laird of Fairly, with whom he lived two years; then changed his service for that of Crawford of Doonside. At length, being desirous of settling in life, he took a perpetual lease of seven acres of land from Dr. Campbell, physician in Ayr, with the view of commencing nurseryman and public gardener, and, having built a house upon it with his own hands, married in December, 1757, Agnes Brown. The first fruit of this marriage was Robert, the subject of these memoirs. Before William Burnes had made much progress in preparing his nursery, he was withdrawn from that undertaking by Mr. Ferguson, who purchased the estate of Doonholm, in the immediate neighborhood,

* This house is on the right-hand side of the road from Ayr to Mayhole, which forms a part of the road from Glasgow to Port-Patrick. It is now a country ale-house.

and engaged him as his gardener and overseer, and this was his situation when our poet was born. When in the service of Mr. Ferguson, he lived in his own house, his wife managing her family, and her little dairy, which consisted of two, sometimes of three, milch cows; and this state of unambitious content continued till the year 1766. His son Robert was sent by him, in his sixth year, to a school at Alloway Miln, about a mile distant, taught by a person of the name of Campbell; but this teacher being in a few months appointed master of the workhouse at Ayr, William Burnes, in conjunction with some other heads of families, engaged John Murdoch in his stead. The education of our poet, and of his brother Gilbert, was in common; and whilst under Mr. Murdoch, they learned to read English tolerably well, and to write a little. He also taught them the elements of English grammar, in which Robert made some proficiency—a circumstance which had considerable weight in the unfolding of his genius and character; as he soon became remarkable for the fluency and correctness of his expression, and read the few books that came in his way with much pleasure and improvement.

It appears that William Burnes approved himself greatly in the service of Mr. Ferguson, by his intelligence, industry, and integrity. In consequence of this, with a view of promoting his interest, Mr. Ferguson leased to him the farm of Mount Oliphant, in the parish of Ayr; consisting of upwards of seventy acres (about ninety, English Imperial measure), the rent of which was to be forty pounds annually for the first six years, and afterwards forty-five pounds. Mr. Ferguson also lent him a hundred pounds to assist in stocking the farm, to which he removed at Whitsuntide, 1766. But this, in place of being of advantage to William Burnes, as it was intended by his former master, was the commencement of much anxiety and distress to the whole family, which is forcibly described by his son, Gilbert, in a letter to Mrs. Dunlop:

“Mount Oliphant, the farm my father possessed in the parish of Ayr, is almost the very poorest soil I know of in a state of cultivation. A stronger proof of this I cannot give, than that, notwithstanding the extraordinary rise in the value of lands in Scotland, it was, after a considerable sum laid out in improving it by the proprietor, let a few years ago five pounds per annum lower than the rent paid for it by my father thirty years ago. My father, in consequence of this, soon came into difficulties, which were increased by the loss of several of his cattle by accidents and disease. To the buffetings of misfortune, we could only oppose hard labor and the most rigid economy. We lived very sparingly. For several years butcher's meat was a stranger in the house, while all the members

of the family exerted themselves to the utmost of their strength, and rather beyond it, in the labors of the farm. My brother, at the age of thirteen, assisted in thrashing the crop of corn, and at fifteen was the principal laborer on the farm, for we had no hired servant, male or female. The anguish of mind we felt at our tender years, under these straits and difficulties, was very great. To think of our father growing old (for he was now above fifty) broken down with the long-continued fatigues of his life, with a wife and five other children, and in a declining state of circumstances, these reflections produced in my brother's mind and mine sensations of the deepest distress. I doubt not but the hard labor and sorrow of this period of his life, was in a great measure the cause of that depression of spirits with which Robert was so often afflicted through his whole life afterwards. At this time he was almost constantly afflicted in the evenings with a dull headache, which, at a future period of his life, was exchanged for a palpitation of the heart, and a threatening of fainting and suffocation in his bed, in the night-time.

"By a stipulation in my father's lease, he had a right to throw it up, if he thought proper, at the end of every sixth year. He attempted to fix himself in a better farm at the end of the first six years, but failing in that attempt, he continued where he was for six years more. He then took the farm of Lochlea, of 180 acres, at the rent of twenty shillings an acre, in the parish of Tarbolton, of Mr. ———, then a merchant in Ayr, and now (1797) a merchant at Liverpool. He removed to this farm at Whitsuntide, 1777, and possessed it only seven years. No writing had ever been made out of the conditions of the lease; a misunderstanding took place respecting them; the subjects in dispute were submitted to arbitration, and the decision involved my father's affairs in ruin. He lived to know of this decision, but not to see any execution in consequence of it. He died on the 18th of February, 1784."

Of this frugal, industrious, and good man, the following beautiful character has been given by Mr. Murdoch:—"He was a tender and affectionate father; he took pleasure in leading his children in the path of virtue; not in driving them, as some parents do, to the performance of duties to which they themselves are averse. He took care to find fault but very seldom; and therefore, when he did rebuke, he was listened to with a kind of reverential awe. A look of disapprobation was felt; a reproof was severely so; and a stripe with the *tawz*, even on the skirt of the coat, gave heart-felt pain, produced a loud lamentation, and brought forth a flood of tears.

"He had the art of gaining the esteem and good-will of those

that were laborers under him. I think I never saw him angry but twice: the one time it was with the foreman of the band, for not reaping the field as he was desired; and the other time it was with an old man, for using smutty innuendoes and *double entendres*. Were every foul-mouthed old man to receive a seasonable check in this way, it would be to the advantage of the rising generation. As he was at no time overbearing to inferiors, he was equally incapable of that passive, pitiful, paltry spirit, that induces some people to *keep booing and booing* in the presence of a great man. He always treated superiors with a becoming respect; but he never gave the smallest encouragement to aristocratical arrogance. But I must not pretend to give you a description of all the manly qualities, the rational and Christian virtues, of the venerable William Burnes. Time would fail me. I shall only add, that he carefully practised every known duty, and avoided every thing that was criminal; or, in the apostle's words, 'Herein did he exercise himself, in living a life void of offence towards God and towards men.' Oh for a world of men of such dispositions! We should then have no wars. I have often wished, for the good of mankind, that it were as customary to honor and perpetuate the memory of those who excel in moral rectitude, as it is to extol what are called heroic actions: then would the mausoleum of the friend of my youth overtop and surpass most of the monuments I see in Westminster Abbey!"

Under the humble roof of his parents, it appears indeed that our poet had great advantages; but his opportunities of information at school were more limited as to time than they usually are among his countrymen, in his condition of life; and the acquisitions which he made, and the poetical talent which he exerted, under the pressure of early and incessant toil, and of inferior, and perhaps scanty nutriment, testify at once the extraordinary force and activity of his mind. In his frame of body he rose nearly five feet ten inches, and assumed the proportions that indicate agility as well as strength. In the various labors of the farm he excelled all his competitors. Gilbert Burns declares that in mowing, the exercise that tries all the muscles most severely, Robert was the only man that, at the end of a summer's day, he was ever obliged to acknowledge as his master. But though our poet gave the powers of his body to the labors of the farm, he refused to bestow on them his thoughts or his cares. While the ploughshare under his guidance passed through the sward, or the grass fell under the sweep of his scythe, he was humming the songs of his country, musing on the deeds of ancient valor, or rapt in the illusions of Fancy, as her enchantments rose on his view. Happily the Sunday is yet a sabbath, on which man and beast rest from their labors. On this day, therefore, Burns

could indulge in a freer intercourse with the charms of nature. It was his delight to wander alone on the banks of Ayr, whose stream is now immortal, and to listen to the song of the blackbird at the close of the summer's day. But still greater was his pleasure, as he himself informs us, in walking on the sheltered side of a wood, in a cloudy winter-day, and hearing the storm rave among the trees; and more elevated still his delight, to ascend some eminence during the agitations of nature, to stride along its summit while the lightning flashed around him, and, amidst the howlings of the tempest, to apostrophize the spirit of the storm. Such situations he declares most favorable to devotion—"Rapt in enthusiasm, I seem to ascend towards Him *who walks on the wings of the wind!*" If other proofs were wanting of the character of his genius, this might determine it. The heart of the poet is peculiarly awake to every impression of beauty and sublimity; but, with the higher order of poets, the beautiful is less attractive than the sublime.

The gayety of many of Burns's writings, and the lively and even cheerful coloring with which he has portrayed his own character, may lead some persons to suppose, that the melancholy which hung over him towards the end of his days was not an original part of his constitution. It is not to be doubted, indeed, that this melancholy acquired a darker hue in the progress of his life; but, independent of his own and of his brother's testimony, evidence is to be found among his papers that he was subject very early to those depressions of mind, which are perhaps not wholly separable from the sensibility of genius, but which in him rose to an uncommon degree. The following letter addressed to his father, will serve as a proof of this observation. It was written at the time when he was learning the business of a flax-dresser, and is dated

"HONORED SIR—

IRVINE, Dec. 27, 1781.

"I have purposely delayed writing, in the hope that I should have the pleasure of seeing you on New-year's day; but work comes so hard upon us, that I do not choose to be absent on that account, as well as for some other little reasons, which I shall tell you at meeting. My health is nearly the same as when you were here, only my sleep is a little sounder, and, on the whole, I am rather better than otherwise, though I mend by very slow degrees. The weakness of my nerves has so debilitated my mind, that I dare neither review past wants nor look forward into futurity; for the least anxiety or perturbation in my breast produces most unhappy effects on my whole frame. Sometimes, indeed, when for an hour or two my spirits are a little lightened, I *glimmer* a little into futurity; but my principal, and indeed my only pleasurable employ-

ment, is looking backwards and forwards in a moral and religious way. I am quite transported at the thought, that ere long, perhaps very soon, I shall bid an eternal adieu to all the pains, and uneasinesses, and disquietudes of this weary life; for I assure you I am heartily tired of it; and if I do not very much deceive myself, I could contentedly and gladly resign it.

The soul, uneasy, and confined at home,
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.

"It is for this reason I am more pleased with the 15th, 16th, and 17th verses of the 7th chapter of Revelations, than with any ten times as many verses in the whole Bible, and would not exchange the noble enthusiasm with which they inspire me for all that this world has to offer.* As for this world, I despair of ever making a figure in it. I am not formed for the bustle of the busy, nor the flutter of the gay. I shall never again be capable of entering into such scenes. Indeed, I am altogether unconcerned at the thoughts of this life. I foresee that poverty and obscurity probably await me, and I am in some measure prepared, and daily preparing, to meet them. I have but just time and paper to return you my grateful thanks for the lessons of virtue and piety you have given me, which were too much neglected at the time of giving them, but which, I hope, have been remembered ere it is yet too late. Present my dutiful respects to my mother, and my compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Muir; and, with wishing you a merry New-year's day, I shall conclude.

"I am, honored Sir,

"Your dutiful son,

"ROBERT BURNS.

"P. S. My meal is nearly out; but I am going to borrow, till I get more."

This letter, written several years before the publication of his poems, when his name was as obscure as his condition was humble, displays the philosophic melancholy which so generally forms the poetical temperament, and that buoyant and ambitious spirit which indicates a mind conscious of its strength. At Irvine, Burns at this time possessed a single room for his lodging, rented perhaps at the rate of a shilling a week. He passed his days in constant

* The verses of Scripture here alluded to, are as follow :

"15. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

"16. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

"17. For the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

labor as a flax-dresser, and his food consisted chiefly of oatmeal sent to him from his father's family. The store of this humble, though wholesome nutriment, it appears, was nearly exhausted, and he was about to borrow till he should obtain a supply. Yet even in this situation his active imagination had formed to itself pictures of eminence and distinction. His despair of making a figure in the world shows how ardently he wished for honorable fame; and his contempt of life, founded on this despair, is the genuine expression of a youthful and generous mind. In such a state of reflection and of suffering, the imagination of Burns naturally passed the dark boundaries of our earthly horizon, and rested on those beautiful representations of a better world, where there is neither thirst, nor hunger, nor sorrow, and where happiness shall be in proportion to the capacity of happiness.

Such a disposition is far from being at variance with social enjoyments. Those who have studied the affinities of mind know that a melancholy of this description, after a while, seeks relief in the endearments of society, and that it has no distant connection with the flow of cheerfulness, or even the extravagance of mirth. It was a few days after the writing of this letter that our poet, "in giving a welcoming carousal to the new year, with his gay companions," suffered his flax to catch fire, and his shop to be consumed to ashes.

The energy of Burns's mind was not exhausted by his daily labors, the effusions of his muse, his social pleasures, or his solitary meditations. Some time previous to his engagement as a flax-dresser, having heard that a debating-club had been established in Ayr, he resolved to try how such a meeting would succeed in the village of Tarbolton. About the end of the year 1780, our poet, his brother, and five other young peasants of the neighborhood, formed themselves into a society of this sort, the declared objects of which were to relax themselves after toil, to promote sociality and friendship, and to improve the mind. The laws and regulations were furnished by Burns. The members were to meet after the labors of the day were over, once a week, in a small public-house in the village; where each should offer his opinion on a given question or subject, supporting it by such arguments as he thought proper. The debate was to be conducted with order and decorum; and after it was finished, the members were to choose a subject for discussion at the ensuing meeting. The sum expended by each was not to exceed three-pence; and, with the humble notation that this could procure, they were to toast their mistresses, and to cultivate friendship with each other.

After the family of our bard removed from Tarbolton to the

neighborhood of Mauchline, he and his brother were requested to assist in forming a similar institution there. The regulations of the club at Mauchline were nearly the same as those of the club at Tarbolton; but one laudable alteration was made. The fines for non-attendance had at Tarbolton been spent in enlarging their scanty potations: at Mauchline it was fixed, that the money so arising should be set apart for the purchase of books; and the first work procured in this manner was the *Mirror*, the separate numbers of which were at that time recently collected and published in volume. After it followed a number of other works, chiefly of the same nature, and among these the *Lounger*.

The society of Mauchline still subsists, and was in the list of subscribers to the first edition of the works of its celebrated associate.

Whether, in the humble societies of which he was a member, Burns acquired much direct information, may perhaps be questioned. It cannot however be doubted, that by collision the faculties of his mind would be excited, that by practice his habits of enunciation would be established, and thus we have some explanation of that early command of words and of expression which enabled him to pour forth his thoughts in language not unworthy of his genius, and which, of all his endowments, seemed, on his appearance in Edinburgh, the most extraordinary. For associations of a literary nature, our poet acquired a considerable relish; and happy had it been for him, after he emerged from the condition of a peasant, if fortune had permitted him to enjoy them in the degree of which he was capable, so as to have fortified his principles of virtue by the purification of his taste, and given to the energies of his mind habits of exertion that might have excluded other associations, in which it must be acknowledged they were too often wasted, as well as debased.

The whole course of the Ayr is fine; but the banks of that river, as it bends to the eastward above Mauchline, are singularly beautiful, and they were frequented, as may be imagined, by our poet in his solitary walks. Here the muse often visited him. In one of these wanderings, he met among the woods a celebrated Beauty of the west of Scotland;* a lady, of whom it is said, that the charms of her person corresponded with the character of her mind. This incident gave rise, as might be expected, to a poem, of which an account will be found in the following letter, in which he inclosed it to the object of his inspiration:

* Miss Alexander, of Ballochmyle.

TO MISS ———.

"MADAM:

MOSSGIEL, Nov. 18, 1778.

"Poets are such *outré* beings, so much the children of wayward fancy and capricious whim, that I believe the world generally allows them a larger latitude in the laws of propriety, than the sober sons of judgment and prudence. I mention this as an apology for the liberties that a nameless stranger has taken with you in the inclosed poem, which he begs leave to present to you with. Whether it has poetical merit any way worthy of the name, I am not the proper judge; but it is the best my abilities can produce; and, what to a good heart will perhaps be a superior grace, it is equally sincere as fervent.

"The scenery was nearly taken from real life, though I dare say, Madam, you do not recollect it, as I believe you scarcely noticed the poetic *revoir* as he wandered by you. I had roved out as chance directed, in the favorite haunts of my muse, on the banks of Ayr, to view nature in all the gayety of the vernal year. The evening sun was flaming over the distant western hills; not a breath stirred the crimson opening blossom, or the verdant spreading leaf. It was a golden moment for a poetic heart. I listened to the feathered warblers, pouring their harmony on every hand, with a congenial kindred regard, and frequently turned out of my path, lest I should disturb their little songs, or frighten them to another station. Surely, said I to myself, he must be a wretch indeed, who, regardless of your harmonious endeavor to please him, can eye your elusive flights to discover your secret recesses, and to rob you of all the property nature gives you, your dearest comforts, your helpless nestlings. Even the hoary hawthorn twig that shot across the way, what heart at such a time but must have been interested in its welfare, and wished it preserved from the rudely-browsing cattle, or the withering eastern blast? Such was the scene, and such the hour, when in a corner of my prospect I spied one of the fairest pieces of Nature's workmanship that ever crowned a poetic landscape, or met a poet's eye, those visionary bards excepted who hold commerce with aerial beings! Had Calumny and Villainy taken my walk, they had at that moment sworn eternal peace with such an object.

"What an hour of inspiration for a poet! It would have raised plain, dull, historic prose into metaphor and measure.

"The inclosed song was the work of my return home; and perhaps it but poorly answers what might have been expected from such a scene. * * * * *

"I have the honor to be, Madam,

"Your most obedient, and very humble servant,

"ROBERT BURNS."

'Twas even—the dewy fields were green,
 On every blade the pearls hang ;*
 The Zephyr wantoned round the bean,
 And bore its fragrant sweets along:
 In every glen the mavis sang,
 All nature listening seemed the while,
 Except where green-wood echoes rang
 Among the braes o' Ballochmyle †

With careless step I onward strayed,
 My heart rejoiced in nature's joy,
 When, musing in a lonely glade,
 A maiden fair I chanced to spy;
 Her look was like the morning's eye,
 Her air like nature's vernal smile,
 Perfection whispered passing by,
 Behold the lass o' Ballochmyle †

Fair is the morn in flowery May,
 And sweet is night in Autumn mild:
 When roving through the garden gay,
 Or wandering in a lonely wild:
 But woman, nature's darling child !
 There all her charms she does compile;
 E'en there her other works are foiled
 By the bonny lass o' Ballochmyle.

O, had she been a country maid,
 And I the happy country swain,
 Though sheltered in the lowest shed
 That ever rose in Scotland's plain,
 Through weary winter's wind and rain,
 With joy, with rapture, I would toil;
 And nightly to my bosom strain
 The bonny lass o' Ballochmyle.

Then pride might climb the slippery steep
 Where fame and honors lofty shine;
 And thirst of gold might tempt the deep,
 Or downward sink the Indian mine;
 Give me the cot below the pine,
 To tend the flocks or till the soil,
 And every day have joys divine
 With the bonny lass o' Ballochmyle.

In the manuscript book in which our poet has recounted this incident, and into which the letter and poem were copied, he complains that the lady made no reply to his effusions, and this appears to have wounded his self-love. It is not, however, difficult to find an excuse for her silence. Her modesty might prevent her from perceiving that the muse of Tibullus breathed in this nameless poet, and that her beauty was awakening strains destined to im-

* *Hang*, Scotticism for *hung*.

† Variation. The lily's hue and rose's dye
 Bespoke the lass o' Ballochmyle.

mortality on the banks of the Ayr. It may be conceived also, that supposing the verses duly appreciated, delicacy might find it difficult to express its acknowledgments. The fervent imagination of the rustic bard possessed more of tenderness than of respect. Instead of raising himself to the condition of the object of his admiration, he presumed to reduce her to his own, and to strain this high-born beauty to his daring bosom.

The sensibility of our bard's temper, and the force of his imagination, exposed him in a particular manner to the impressions of beauty; and these qualities, united to his impassioned eloquence, gave him in turn a powerful influence over the female heart. The banks of the Ayr formed the scene of youthful passions of a still tenderer nature, the history of which it would be improper to reveal, were it even in our power, and the traces of which will soon be discoverable only in those strains of nature and sensibility to which they gave birth. The song entitled *Highland Mary* is known to relate to one of these attachments. "It was written," says our bard, "on one of the most interesting passages of my youthful days." The object of this passion died early in life, and the impression left on the mind of Burns seems to have been deep and lasting. Several years afterwards, when he was removed to Nithsdale, he gave vent to the sensibility of his recollections in the following impassioned lines addressed to "Mary in Heaven!"

Thou lingering star, with less'ning ray,
That lov'st to greet the early morn,
Again thou usher'st in the day
My Mary from my soul was torn.
O Mary, dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
Seest thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

That sacred hour can I forget?
Can I forget the hallowed grove,
Where by the winding Ayr we met,
To live one day of parting love?
Eternity will not efface
Those records dear of transports past
Thy image at our last embrace!
Ah! little thought we 'twas our last!

Ayr gurgling kissed his pebbled shore,
O'erhung with wild woods, thickening green;
The fragrant birch and hawthorn hoar,
Twined amorous round the raptured scene.
The flowers sprang wanton to be pressed,
The birds sang love on every spray,
Till too, too soon, the glowing west
Proclaimed the speed of winged day.

Still o'er these scenes my memory wakes,
 And fondly broods with miser care !
 Time but the impression deeper makes,
 As streams their channels deeper wear.
 My Mary, dear departed shade !
 Where is thy place of blissful rest ?
 Seest thou thy lover lowly laid ?
 Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast ?

At this time Burns's prospects in life were so extremely gloomy, that he had decided upon going out to Jamaica, and had procured the situation of overseer on an estate belonging to Dr. Douglas ; not, however, without lamenting, that want of patronage should force him to think of a project so repugnant to his feelings, when his ambition aimed at no higher object than the station of an exciseman or gauger in his own country. But the situation in which he was now placed cannot be better illustrated than by introducing the letter which he wrote to Dr. Moore, giving an account of his life up to this period. As it was never intended to see the light, elegance, or perfect correctness of composition, will not be expected. These, however, will be compensated by the opportunity of seeing our poet, as he gives the incidents of his life, unfold the peculiarities of his character with all the careless vigor and open sincerity of his mind.

"SIR :

MAUCHLINE, 2d August, 1787.

"For some months past I have been rambling over the country ; but I am now confined with some lingering complaints, originating, as I take it, in the stomach. To divert my spirits a little in this miserable fog of *ennui*, I have taken a whim to give you a history of myself. My name has made some little noise in this country ; you have done me the honor to interest yourself very warmly in my behalf ; and I think a faithful account of what character of a man I am, and how I came by that character, may perhaps amuse you in an idle moment. I will give you an honest narrative ; though I know it will be often at my own expense ;—for I assure you, sir, I have, like Solomon, whose character, except in the trifling affair of *wisdom*, I sometimes think I resemble—I have, I say, like him, 'turned my eyes to behold madness and folly,' and, like him, too frequently shaken hand with their intoxicating friendship. * * * After you have perused these pages, should you think them trifling and impertinent, I only beg leave to tell you, that the poor author wrote them under some twitching qualms of conscience, arising from a suspicion that he was doing what he ought not to do—a predicament he has more than once been in before.

"I have not the most distant pretensions to assume that character, which the pye-coated guardians of escutcheons call a Gentleman. When at Edinburgh last winter, I got acquainted in the Herald's Office; and looking through that granary of honors, I there found almost every name in the kingdom; but for me,

My ancient but ignoble blood
Has crept through scoundrels ever since the flood.

Gules, Purpure, Argent, &c., quite disowned me.

"My father was of the north of Scotland, the son of a farmer, and was thrown by early misfortunes on the world at large; where, after many years' wanderings and sojournings, he picked up a pretty large quantity of observation and experience, to which I am indebted for most of my pretensions to wisdom. I have met with few who understood *men, their manners, and their ways*, equal to him; but stubborn, ungainly integrity, and headlong, ungovernable irascibility, are disqualifying circumstances; consequently, I was born a very poor man's son. For the first six or seven years of my life, my father was gardener to a worthy gentleman of small estate in the neighborhood of Ayr. Had he continued in that station, I must have marched off to be one of the little underlings about a farm-house; but it was his dearest wish and prayer to have it in his power to keep his children under his own eye till they could discern between good and evil; so, with the assistance of his generous master, my father ventured on a small farm on his estate. At those years I was by no means a favorite with anybody. I was a good deal noted for a retentive memory, a stubborn sturdy something in my disposition, and an enthusiastic idiot piety. I say *idiot* piety, because I was then but a child. Though it cost the schoolmaster some thrashings, I made an excellent English scholar; and by the time I was ten or eleven years of age, I was a critic in substantives, verbs, and particles. In my infant and boyish days, too, I owed much to an old woman who resided in the family, remarkable for her ignorance, credulity, and superstition. She had, I suppose, the largest collection in the country of tales and songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, elf-candles, deadlights, wraiths, apparitions, cantraps, giants, enchanted towers, dragons, and other trumpery. This cultivated the latent seeds of poetry; but had so strong an effect on my imagination, that to this hour, in my nocturnal rambles, I sometimes keep a sharp look-out in suspicious places: and though nobody can be more skeptical than I am in such matters, yet it often takes an effort of philosophy to shake off these idle terrors. The earliest composition that I recollect taking pleasure in was *The Vision of Mirza*, and a hymn of Addison's, beginning

'How are thy servants blessed, O Lord!' I particularly remember one half-stanza, which was music to my boyish ear—

For though on dreadful whirls we hung
High on the broken wave.

I met with these pieces in Mason's English Collection, one of my school-books. The two first books I ever read in private, and which gave me more pleasure than any two books I ever read since, were, *The Life of Hannibal*, and *The History of Sir William Wallace*. Hannibal gave my young ideas such a turn, that I used to strut in raptures up and down after the recruiting drum and bagpipe, and wish myself tall enough to be a soldier; while the story of Wallace poured a Secttish prejudice into my veins, which will boil along there till the flood-gates of life shut in eternal rest.

"Polemical divinity about this time was putting the country half mad; and I, ambitious of shining in conversation parties on Sundays, between sermons, at funerals, &c., used a few years afterwards to puzzle Calvinism with so much heat and indiscretion, that I raised a hue-and-cry of heresy against me, which has not ceased to this hour.

"My vicinity to Ayr was of some advantage to me. My social disposition, when not checked by some modifications of spirited pride, was, like our catechism definition of infinitude, *without bounds or limits*. I formed several connections with other yonkers who possessed superior advantages, the *youngling* actors, who were busy in the rehearsal of parts in which they were shortly to appear on the stage of life, where, alas! I was destined to drudge behind the scenes. It is not commonly at this green age that our young gentry have a just sense of the immense distance between them and their ragged play-fellows. It takes a few dashes into the world, to give the young great man that proper, decent, unnoticing disregard for the poor, insignificant, stupid devils, the mechanics and peasantry around him, who were perhaps born in the same village. My young superiors never insulted the *clouterly* appearance of my plough-boy carcase, the two extremes of which were often exposed to all the inclemencies of all the seasons. They would give me stray volumes of books: among them, even then, I could pick up some observations; and one, whose heart I am sure not even the *Munny Begum* scenes have tainted, helped me to a little French. Parting with these my young friends and benefactors, as they occasionally went off for the East or West Indies, was often to me a sore affliction; but I was soon called to more serious evils. My father's generous master died; the farm proved a ruinous bargain; and, to clench the misfortune, we fell into the hands of a factor, who sat for the picture I have drawn of one in my *Tale of Two Dogs*.

My father was advanced in life when he married ; I was the eldest of seven children ; and he, worn out by early hardships, was unfit for labor. My father's spirit was soon irritated, but not easily broken. There was a freedom in his lease in two years more ; and, to weather these two years, we retrenched our expenses. We lived very poorly : I was a dexterous ploughman for my age ; and the next eldest to me was a brother (Gilbert), who could drive the plough very well, and help me to thrash the corn. A novel-writer might perhaps have viewed these scenes with some satisfaction ; but so did not I ; my indignation yet boils at the recollection of the s—l factor's insolent threatening letters, which used to set us all in tears.

“ This kind of life—the cheerless gloom of a hermit, with the unceasing moil of a galley-slave, brought me to my sixteenth year : a little before which period I first committed the sin of rhyme. You know our country custom of coupling a man and woman together as partners in the labors of harvest. In my fifteenth autumn, my partner was a bewitching creature, a year younger than myself. My scarcity of English denies me the power of doing her justice in that language, but you know the Scottish idiom—she was a *bonnie, sweet, sonsie lass*. In short, she, altogether unwittingly to herself, initiated me into that delicious passion, which, in spite of acid disappointment, gin-horse prudence, and book-worm philosophy, I hold to be the first of human joys, our dearest blessing here below ! How she caught the contagion, I cannot tell : you medical people talk much of infection from breathing the same air, the touch, &c. ; but I never expressly said I loved her. Indeed, I did not know myself why I liked so much to loiter behind with her, when returning in the evening from our labors ; why the tones of her voice made my heart-strings thrill like an *Æolian* harp ; and particularly why my pulse beat such a furious rattan when I looked and fingered over her little hand to pick out the cruel nettle-stings and thistles. Among her other love-inspiring qualities, she sung sweetly ; and it was her favorite reel to which I attempted giving an embodied vehicle in rhyme. I was not so presumptuous as to imagine that I could make verses like printed ones, composed by men who had Greek and Latin ; but my girl sung a song, which was said to be composed by a small country laird's son, on one of his father's maids, with whom he was in love ! and I saw no reason why I might not rhyme as well as he : for, excepting that he could smear sheep, and cast peats, his father living in the moorlands, he had no more school-craft than myself.

“ Thus with me began love and poetry ; which at times have been my only, and till within the last twelve months, have been my

highest enjoyment. My father struggled on till he reached the freedom in his lease, when he entered on a larger farm, about ten miles farther in the country. The nature of the bargain he made was such as to throw a little ready money into his hands at the commencement of his lease; otherwise the affair would have been impracticable. For four years we lived comfortably here; but a difference commencing between him and his landlord as to terms, after three years' tossing and whirling in the vortex of litigation, my father was just saved from the horrors of a jail by a consumption, which, after two years' promises, kindly stepped in, and carried him away, to 'where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest.'

"It is during the time that we lived on this farm that my little story is most eventful. I was, at the beginning of this period, perhaps the most ungainly, awkward boy in the parish—no *solitaire* was less acquainted with the ways of the world. What I knew of ancient story was gathered from Salmon's and Guthrie's geographical grammars; and the ideas I had formed of modern manners, of literature and criticism, I got from the *Spectator*. These, with *Pope's Works*, some plays of *Shakspeare*, *Tull* and *Dickson on Agriculture*, *The Pantheon*, *Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding*, *Stackhouse's History of the Bible*, *Justice's British Gardener's Directory*, *Bayle's Lectures*, *Allan Ramsay's Works*, *Taylor's Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin*, *A Select Collection of English Songs*, and *Hervey's Meditations*, had formed the whole of my reading. The collection of songs was my *vade mecum*. I pored over them driving my cart, or walking to labor, song by song, verse by verse; carefully noting the true, tender, or sublime, from affectation and fustian. I am convinced I owe to this practice much of my critic craft, such as it is.

"In my seventeenth year, to give my manners a brush, I went to a country dancing-school.—My father had an unaccountable antipathy against these meetings; and my going was, what to this moment I repent, in opposition to his wishes. My father, as I said before, was subject to strong passions; from that instance of disobedience in me, he took a sort of dislike to me, which I believe was one cause of the dissipation which marked my succeeding years. I say dissipation, comparatively with the strictness, and sobriety, and regularity of Presbyterian country life; for though the Will-o'-Wisp meteors of thoughtless whim were almost the sole lights of my path, yet early ingrained piety and virtue kept me for several years afterwards within the line of innocence. The great misfortune of my life was to want an aim. I had felt early some stirrings of ambition, but they were the blind gropings of Homer's Cyclops round the walls of his cave. I saw my father's

situation entailed on me perpetual labor. The only two openings by which I could enter the temple of Fortune, was the gate of niggardly economy, or the path of little chicaning bargain-making. The first is so contracted an aperture, I never could squeeze myself into it;—the last I always hated—there was contamination in the very entrance! Thus abandoned of aim or view in life, with a strong appetite for sociability, as well from native hilarity, as from a pride of observation and remark; a constitutional melancholy or hypochondriasm, that made me fly solitude; add to these incentives to social life, my reputation for bookish knowledge, a certain wild logical talent, and a strength of thought, something like the rudiments of good sense; and it will not seem surprising that I was generally a welcome guest, where I visited, or any great wonder that, always where two or three met together, there was I among them. But far beyond all other impulses of my heart, was *un penchant à l'adorable moitié du genre humain*. My heart was completely tinder, and was eternally lighted up by some goddess or other; and as in every other warfare in this world, my fortune was various—sometimes I was received with favor, and sometimes I was mortified with a repulse. At the plough, scythe, or reap-hook, I feared no competitor, and thus I set absolute want at defiance; and as I never cared farther for my labors than while I was in actual exercise, I spent the evenings in the way after my own heart. A country lad seldom carries on a love-adventure without an assisting confidant. I possessed a curiosity, zeal, and intrepid dexterity, that recommended me as a proper second on these occasions; and I dare say I felt as much pleasure in being in the secret of half the loves of the parish of Tarbolton, as ever did statesman in knowing the intrigues of half the courts of Europe.—The very goose-feather in my hand seems to know instinctively the well-worn path of my imagination, the favorite theme of my song; and is with difficulty restrained from giving you a couple of paragraphs on the love-adventures of my compeers, the humble inmates of the farm-house and cottage; but the grave sons of science, ambition, or avarice, baptize these things by the name of Follies. To the sons and daughters of labor and poverty, they are matters of the most serious nature: to them the ardent hope, the stolen interview, the tender farewell, are the greatest and most delicious parts of their enjoyments.

“Another circumstance in my life which made some alteration in my mind and manners, was that I spent my nineteenth summer on a smuggling coast, a good distance from home, at a noted school, to learn mensuration, surveying, dialling, &c., in which I made a pretty good progress. But I made a greater progress in the knowledge of mankind. The contraband trade was at that time very suc-

cessful, and it sometimes happened to me to fall in with those who carried it on. Scenes of swaggering riot and roaring dissipation were till this time new to me: but I was no enemy to social life. Here, though I learnt to fill my glass, and to mix without fear in a drunken squabble, yet I went on with a high hand with my geometry, till the sun entered Virgo, a month which is always a carnival in my bosom, when a charming *fillette*, who lived next door to the school, upset my trigonometry, and sent me off at a tangent from the sphere of my studies. I, however, struggled on with my *sines* and *co-sines* for a few days more; but stepping into the garden one charming noon to take the sun's altitude, there I met my angel,

Like Proserpine, gathering flowers,
Herself a fairer flower.——

"It was in vain to think of doing any more good at school. The remaining week I staid, I did nothing but craze the faculties of my soul about her, or steal out to meet her; and the two last nights of my stay in the country, had sleep been a mortal sin, the image of this modest and innocent girl had kept me guiltless.

"I returned home very considerably improved. My reading was enlarged with the very important addition of Thomson's and Shenstone's Works; I had seen human nature in a new phasis; and I engaged several of my schoolfellows to keep up a literary correspondence with me. This improved me in composition. I had met with a collection of letters by the wits of Queen Anne's reign, and I poured over them most devoutly; I kept copies of any of my own letters that pleased me; and a comparison between them and the composition of most of my correspondents flattered my vanity. I carried this whim so far, that though I had not three farthings' worth of business in the world, yet almost every post brought me as many letters as if I had been a broad plodding son of a day-book and ledger.

"My life flowed on much in the same course till my twenty-third year. *Vive l'amour, et vive la bagatelle*, were my sole principles of action. The addition of two more authors to my library gave me great pleasure; Sterne and M'Kenzie—*Tristram Shandy* and *The Man of Feeling*—were my bosom favorites. Poesy was still a darling walk for my mind; but it was only indulged in according to the humor of the hour. I had usually half a dozen or more pieces in hand; I took up one or the other, as it suited the momentary tone of the mind, and dismissed the work as it bordered on fatigue. My passions, when once lighted up, raged like so many devils till they got vent in rhyme; and then the conning over my verses, like a spell, soothed all into quiet! None of the rhymes of those days

are in print, except *Winter, a Dirge*, the eldest of my printed pieces ; *The Death of Poor Mailie*, *John Barleycorn*, and songs, first, second, and third. Song second was the ebullition of that passion which ended the forementioned school business.

"My twenty-third year was to me an important era. Partly through whim, and partly that I wished to set about doing something in life, I joined a flax-dresser in a neighboring town (Irvine) to learn his trade. This was an unlucky affair. My * * * * *; and, to finish the whole, as we were giving a welcoming carousal to the new year, the shop took fire, and burnt to ashes ; and I was left, like a true poet, not worth a sixpence.

"I was obliged to give up this scheme ; the clouds of misfortune were gathering thick round my father's head ; and what was worst of all, he was visibly far gone in a consumption ; and, to crown my distresses, a *belle fille* whom I adored, and who had pledged her soul to meet me in the field of matrimony, jilted me with peculiar circumstances of mortification. The finishing evil that brought up the rear of this infernal file was, my constitutional melancholy being increased to such a degree, that for three months I was in a state of mind scarcely to be envied by the hopeless wretches who have got their mittimus—*Depart from me, ye accursed !*

"From this adventure, I learned something of a town life ; but the principle thing which gave my mind a turn was a friendship I formed with a young fellow, a very noble character, but a hapless son of misfortune. He was a son of a simple mechanic ; but a great man in the neighborhood taking him under his patronage, gave him a genteel education, with a view of bettering his situation in life. The patron dying just as he was ready to launch out into the world, the poor fellow in despair went to sea ; where, after a variety of good and ill fortune, a little before I was acquainted with him, he had been set ashore by an American privateer, on the wild coast of Connaught, stripped of every thing. I cannot quit this poor fellow's story without adding, that he is at this time master of a large West-Indianman, belonging to the Thames.

"His mind was fraught with independence, magnanimity, and every manly virtue. I loved and admired him to a degree of enthusiasm, and of course strove to imitate him. In some measure I succeeded ; I had pride before, but he taught it to flow in proper channels. His knowledge of the world was vastly superior to mine, and I was all attention to learn. He was the only man I ever saw who was a greater fool than myself, where woman was the presiding star ; but he spoke of illicit love with the levity of a sailor, which hitherto I had regarded with horror. Here his friendship did me a mischief ; and the consequence was, that soon after I

resumed the plough, I wrote the *Poet's Welcome*.^{*} My reading only increased, while in this town, by two stray volumes of *Pamela*, and one of *Ferdinand Count Fathom*, which gave me some idea of novels. Rhyme, except some religious pieces that are in print, I had given up; but meeting with *Fergusson's Scottish Poems*, I strung anew my wildly-sounding lyre with emulating vigor. When my father died, his all went among the hell-hounds that growl in the kennel of justice; but we made a shift to collect a little money in the family among us, with which, to keep us together, my brother and I took a neighboring farm. My brother wanted my hair-brained imagination, as well as my social and amorous madness; but, in good sense, and every sober qualification, he was far my superior.

"I entered on this farm with a full resolution, 'Come, go to, I will be wise!' I read farming books; I calculated crops; I attended markets: and, in short, in spite of 'the devil, and the world, and the flesh,' I believe I should have been a wise man; but the first year, from unfortunately buying bad seed,—the second, from a late harvest,—we lost half our crops. This overset all my wisdom, and I returned, 'like the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.'

"I now began to be known in the neighborhood as a maker of rhymes. The first of my poetic offspring that saw the light was a burlesque lamentation on a quarrel between two reverend Calvinists, both of them *dramatis personæ* in my *Holy Fair*. I had a notion myself, that the piece had some merit; but to prevent the worst, I gave a copy of it to a friend who was very fond of such things, and told him that I could not guess who was the author of it, but that I thought it pretty clever. With a certain description of the clergy, as well as laity, it met with a roar of applause. *Holy Willie's Prayer* next made its appearance, and alarmed the kirk-session so much, that they held several meetings to look over their spiritual artillery, if haply any of it might be pointed against profane rhymers. Unluckily for me, my wanderings led me on another side, within point-blank shot of their heaviest metal. This is the unfortunate story that gave rise to my printed poem *The Lament*. This was a most melancholy affair, which I cannot yet bear to reflect on, and had very nearly given me one or two of the principal qualifications for a place among those who have lost the chart, and mistaken the reckoning, of Rationality. I gave up my part of the farm to my brother,—in truth, it was only nominally mine,—and made what little preparation was in my power for Jamaica. But,

^{*} Rob the Rhymer's Welcome to his Bastard Child.

before leaving my native country forever, I resolved to publish my poems. I weighed my productions as impartially as was in my power; I thought they had merit; and it was a delicious idea that I should be called a clever fellow, even though it should never reach my ears—a poor negro-driver,—or perhaps a victim to that inhospitable clime, and gone to the world of spirits! I can truly say, that *pauvre inconnu* as I then was, I had pretty nearly as high an idea of myself and my works as I have at this moment, when the public has decided in their favor. It ever was my opinion, that the mistakes and blunders, both in a rational and religious point of view, of which we see thousands daily guilty, are owing to their ignorance of themselves.—To know myself has been all along my constant study. I weighed myself alone; I balanced myself with others; I watched every means of information, to see how much ground I occupied as a man and as a poet: I studied assiduously Nature's design in my formation—where the lights and shades in my character were intended. I was pretty confident my poems would meet with some applause; but, at the worst, the roar of the Atlantic would deafen the voice of censure, and the novelty of West Indian scenes make me forget neglect. I threw off six hundred copies, of which I had got subscriptions for about three hundred and fifty.—My vanity was highly gratified by the reception I met with from the public; and besides, I pocketed, all expenses deducted, nearly twenty pounds. This sum came very seasonably, as I was thinking of indenting myself, for want of money to procure my passage. As soon as I was master of nine guineas, the price of wafting me to the torrid zone, I took a steerage passage in the first ship that was to sail from the Clyde; for

Hungry ruin had me in the wind.

“I had been for some days skulking from covert to covert, under all the terrors of a jail; as some ill-advised people had uncoupled the merciless pack of the law at my heels. I had taken the last farewell of my friends; my chest was on the road to Greenock; I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia, ‘The gloomy night was gathering fast,’ when a letter from Dr. Blacklock, to a friend of mine, overthrew all my schemes, by opening new prospects to my poetic ambition. The Doctor belonged to a set of critics, for whose applause I had not dared to hope. His opinion that I would meet with encouragement in Edinburgh for a second edition fired me so much, that away I posted for that city, without a single acquaintance, or a single letter of introduction. The baneful star, that had so long shed its blasting influence in my zenith, for once made a revolution to the Nadir; and a kind Provi-

dence placed me under the patronage of one of the noblest of men, the Earl of Glencairn. *Oublie moi, Grand Dieu, si jamais je t'oublie !*

"I need relate no farther. At Edinburgh I was in a new world ; I mingled among many classes of men, but all of them new to me, and I was all attention to catch the characters and 'the manners living as they rise.' Whether I have profited, time will show."

The letter alluded to from Dr. Blacklock was addressed to the Rev. Mr. Laurie, Minister of Loudoun, a kind and steady friend, who felt so much interested in the poet, that he immediately forwarded it to him. The letter was received with so much surprise and delight, that, although the ship was unmooring and ready to sail, he at once decided to post to Edinburgh. This letter, so creditable to Dr. Blacklock, deserves to be preserved in any Life of our poet :

"I ought to have acknowledged your favor long ago, not only as a testimony of your kind remembrance, but as it gave me an opportunity of sharing one of the finest, and, perhaps, one of the most genuine entertainments, of which the human mind is susceptible. A number of avocations retarded my progress in reading the poems ; at last, however, I have finished that pleasing perusal. Many instances have I seen of Nature's force and beneficence exerted under numerous and formidable disadvantages : but none equal to that with which you have been kind enough to present me. There is a pathos and delicacy in his serious poems, a vein of wit and humor in those of a more festive turn, which cannot be too much admired, nor too warmly approved ; and I think I shall never open the book without feeling my astonishment renewed and increased. It was my wish to have expressed my approbation in verse ; but whether from declining life, or a temporary depression of spirits, it is at present out of my power to accomplish that agreeable intention.

"Mr. Stewart, Professor of Morals in this University, formerly read me three of the poems, and I had desired him to get my name inserted among the subscribers ; but whether this was done, or not, I never could learn. I have little intercourse with Dr. Blair, but will take care to have the poems communicated to him by the intervention of some mutual friend. It has been told me by a gentleman, to whom I showed the performances, and who sought a copy with diligence and ardor, that the whole impression is already exhausted. It were, therefore, much to be wished, for the sake of the young man, that a second edition, more numerous than the former, could immediately be printed : as it appears certain that its intrinsic merit, and the exertion of the author's friends, might give it a more universal circulation than any thing of the kind which has been published within my memory."

Burns set out for Edinburgh in the month of November, 1786, and arrived on the second day afterwards, having performed his journey on foot. He was furnished with a letter of introduction to Dr. Blacklock, from Mr. Laurie, to whom the Doctor had addressed the letter which has been represented as the immediate cause of his visiting the Scottish metropolis. He was acquainted with Mr. Stewart, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University, and had been entertained by that gentleman at Catrine, his estate in Ayrshire. He had been introduced by Mr. Alexander Dalzel to the Earl of Glencairn, who had expressed his high approbation of his poetical talents. He had friends, therefore, who could introduce him into the circles of literature, as well as of fashion, and his own manners and appearance exceeding every expectation that could have been formed of them, he soon became an object of general curiosity and admiration.

The scene that opened on our bard in Edinburgh was altogether new, and in a variety of other respects highly interesting, especially to one of his disposition of mind. To use an expression of his own, he found himself "suddenly translated from the veriest shades of life" into the presence, and indeed into the society, of a number of persons, previously known to him by report as of the highest distinction in his country, and whose characters it was natural for him to examine with no common curiosity.

From the men of letters, in general, his reception was particularly flattering. The late Dr. Robertson, Dr. Blair, Dr. Gregory, Mr. Stewart, Mr. Mackenzie, and Mr. Fraser Tytler, may be mentioned in the list of those who perceived his uncommon talents, who acknowledged more especially his powers in conversation, and who interested themselves in the cultivation of his genius. In Edinburgh, literary and fashionable society are a good deal mixed. Our bard was an acceptable guest in the gayest and most elevated circles, and frequently received from female beauty and elegance those attentions above all others most grateful to him. At the table of Lord Monboddo he was a frequent guest; and while he enjoyed the society, and partook of the hospitalities of the venerable judge, he experienced the kindness and condescension of his lovely and accomplished daughter. The singular beauty of this young lady was illuminated by that happy expression of countenance which results from the union of cultivated taste and superior understanding, with the finest affections of the mind. The influence of such attractions was not unfelt by our poet. "There has not been any thing like Miss Burnet," said he in a letter to a friend, "in all the combinations of beauty, grace, and goodness, the Creator has formed, since Milton's Eve on the first day of her existence."

In his Address to Edinburgh, she is celebrated in a strain of still greater elevation :

Fair Burnet strikes th'adoring eye,
Heaven's beauties on my fancy shine ;
I see the *stir of love on high*,
And own his work indeed divine !

This lovely woman died a few years afterwards in the flower of youth. Our bard expressed his sensibility on that occasion, in verses addressed to her memory.

Among the men of rank and fashion, Burns was particularly distinguished by James, Earl of Glencairn. On the motion of this nobleman, the *Caledonian Hunt* (an association of the principal of the nobility and gentry of Scotland) extended their patronage to our bard, and admitted him to their gay orgies. He repaid their notice by a dedication of the enlarged and improved edition of his poems, in which he has celebrated their patriotism and independence in very animated terms.

A taste for letters is not always conjoined with habits of temperance and regularity ; and Edinburgh, at the time of which we speak, contained perhaps an uncommon proportion of men of considerable talents, devoted to social excesses, in which their talents were wasted and debased.

Burns entered into several parties of this description, with the usual vehemence of his character. His generous affections, his ardent eloquence, his brilliant and daring imagination, fitted him to be the idol of such associations ; and accustoming himself to conversation of unlimited range, and to festive indulgences that scorned restraint, he gradually lost some portion of his relish for the more pure, but less poignant pleasures, to be found in the circles of taste, elegance, and literature. The sudden alteration in his habits of life operated on him physically as well as morally. The humble fare of an Ayrshire peasant he had exchanged for the luxuries of the Scottish metropolis, and the effects of this change on his ardent constitution could not be inconsiderable. But whatever influence might be produced on his conduct, his excellent understanding suffered no corresponding debasement. He estimated his friends and associates of every description at their proper value, and appreciated his own conduct with a precision that might give scope to much curious and melancholy reflection. He saw his danger, and at times formed resolutions to guard against it ; but he had embarked on the tide of dissipation, and was borne along its stream.

By the new edition of his poem, Burns acquired a sum of money that enabled him not only to partake of the pleasures of Edinburgh, but to gratify a desire he had long entertained, of visiting those

parts of his native country most attractive by their beauty or their grandeur; a desire which the return of summer naturally revived. The scenery of the banks of the Tweed, and of its tributary streams, strongly interested his fancy; and, accordingly, he left Edinburgh on the 6th of May, 1787, on a tour through a country so much celebrated in the rural songs of Scotland. He travelled on horseback, and was accompanied, during some part of his journey, by Mr. Ainslie, writer to the signet, a gentleman who enjoyed much of his friendship and of his confidence.

Having spent three weeks in exploring the interesting scenery of the Tweed, the Jed, the Tiviot, and other border districts, Burns crossed over into Northumberland. Mr. Kerr and Mr. Hood, two gentlemen with whom he had become acquainted in the course of his tour, accompanied him. He visited Alnwick Castle, the princely seat of the Duke of Northumberland; the hermitage and old castle of Warksworth; Morpeth, and Newcastle. In this town he spent two days, and then proceeded to the southwest by Hexham and Wardrue, to Carlisle. After spending a day at Carlisle with his friend Mr. Mitchell, he returned into Scotland by way of Annan.

Of the various persons with whom he became acquainted in the course of this journey, he has, in general, given some account, and almost always a favorable one. From Annan, Burns proceeded to Dumfries, and thence through Sanquhar, to Mossiel, near Mauchline, in Ayrshire, where he arrived about the 8th of June, 1787, after a long absence of six busy and eventful months. It will easily be conceived with what pleasure and pride he was received by his mother, his brothers, and sisters. He had left them poor, and comparatively friendless; he returned to them high in public estimation, and easy in his circumstances. He returned to them unchanged in his ardent affections, and ready to share with them, to the uttermost farthing, the pittance that fortune had bestowed.

Having remained with them a few days, he proceeded again to Edinburgh, and immediately set out on a journey to the Highlands.

From this journey Burns returned to his friends in Ayrshire, with whom he spent the month of July, renewing his friendships, and extending his acquaintance throughout the county, where he was now very generally known and admired. In August he again visited Edinburgh, whence he undertook another journey, towards the middle of this month, in company with Mr. M. Adair, now Dr. Adair, of Harrowgate, of which this gentleman has favored us with the following account:

"Burns and I left Edinburgh together in August, 1787. We rode by Linlithgow and Carron, to Stirling. We visited the iron-works

at Carron, with which the poet was forcibly struck. The resemblance between that place, and its inhabitants, to the cave of the Cyclops, which must have occurred to every classical visitor, presented itself to Burns. At Stirling, the prospects from the castle strongly interested him; in a former visit to which, his national feelings had been powerfully excited by the ruinous and roofless state of the hall in which the Scottish Parliaments had frequently been held. His indignation had vented itself in some imprudent, but not unpoetical lines, which had given much offence, and which he took this opportunity of erasing, by breaking the pane of the window at the inn on which they were written.

"At Stirling, we met with a company of travellers from Edinburgh, among whom was a character, in many respects congenial with that of Burns. This was Nicol, one of the teachers of the High Grammar School at Edinburgh—the same wit and power of conversation, the same fondness for convivial society, and thoughtlessness of to-morrow, characterized both. Jacobitical principles in politics were common to both of them; and these have been suspected, since the revolution of France, to have given place in each to opinions apparently opposite. I regret that I have preserved no *memorabilia* of their conversation, either on this, or on other occasions, when I happened to meet them together. Many songs were sung, which I mention for the sake of observing, that when Burns was called on in his turn, he was accustomed, instead of singing, to recite one or other of his own shorter poems, with a tone and emphasis, which, though not correct or harmonious, were impressive and pathetic. This he did on the present occasion.

"From Stirling we went next morning through the romantic and fertile vale of Devon to Harviestone, in Clackmannanshire, then inhabited by Mrs. Hamilton, with the younger part of whose family Burns had been previously acquainted. He introduced me to the family, and there was formed my first acquaintance with Mr. Hamilton's eldest daughter, to whom I have been married for nine years. Thus was I indebted to Burns for a connection from which I have derived, and expect farther to derive, much happiness.

"During a residence of about ten days at Harviestone, we made excursions to visit various parts of the surrounding scenery, inferior to none in Scotland, in beauty, sublimity, and romantic interest; particularly Castle Campbell, the ancient seat of the family of Argyll; and the famous cataract of the Devon, called the Cauldron Lynn; and the Rumbling Bridge, a single broad arch, thrown by the devil, if tradition is to be believed, across the river, at about the height of a hundred feet above its bed. I am surprised that none of these scenes should have called forth an exertion of Burns's

muse. But I doubt if he had much taste for the picturesque. I well remember, that the ladies at Harviestone, who accompanied us on this jaunt, expressed their disappointment at his not expressing in more glowing and fervid language his impressions of the Cauldron Linn scene, certainly highly sublime, and somewhat horrible.

"A visit to Mrs. Bruce, of Clackmannan, a lady above ninety, the lineal descendant of that race which gave the Scottish throne its brightest ornament, interested his feelings more powerfully. This venerable dame, with characteristic dignity, informed me, on my observing that I believed she was descended from the family of Robert Bruce, that Robert Bruce was sprung from her family. Though almost deprived of speech by a paralytic affection, she preserved her hospitality and urbanity. She was in possession of the hero's helmet and two-handed sword, with which she conferred on Burns and myself the honor of knighthood, remarking, that she had a better right of conferring that title than *some people*. * * * You will of course conclude that the old lady's political tenets were as Jacobitical as the poet's, a conformity which contributed not a little to the cordiality of our reception and entertainment. She gave as her first toast after dinner, 'Awa Uncos,' or, Away with the Strangers. Who these strangers were, you will readily understand. Mrs. A. corrects me by saying it should be 'Hooi, or Hoohi, Uncos,' a sound used by shepherds to direct their dogs to drive away the sheep.

"We returned to Edinburgh by Kinross (on the shore of Lochleven) and Queensferry. I am inclined to think Burns knew nothing of poor Michael Bruce, who was then alive at Kinross, or had died there a short while before. A meeting between the bards, or a visit to the deserted cottage and early grave of poor Bruce, would have been highly interesting.*

"At Dunfermline we visited the ruined abbey, and the abbey-church, now consecrated to Presbyterian worship. Here I mounted the *cutty stool*, or stool of repentance, assuming the character of a penitent for fornication; while Burns from the pulpit addressed to me a ludicrous reproof and exhortation, parodied from that which had been delivered to himself in Ayrshire, where he had, as he assured me, once been one of seven who mounted the *seat of shame* together.

"In the church-yard two broad flag-stones marked the grave of Robert Bruce, for whose memory Burns had more than common veneration. He knelt and kissed the stone with sacred fervor, and

* Bruce died some years before.

heartily (*sens ut mos erat*) execrated the worse than gothic neglect of the first of Scottish heroes."*

The different journeys already mentioned did not satisfy the curiosity of Burns. About the beginning of September he again set out from Edinburgh, on a more extended tour to the Highlands, in company with Mr. Nicol, with whom he had contracted a particular intimacy, which lasted during the remainder of his life. Mr. Nicol was of Dumfriesshire, of a descent equally humble with our poet. In him he rose by the strength of his talents, and fell by the strength of his passions. He died in the summer of 1797. Having received the elements of a classical instruction at his parish school, Mr. Nicol made a very rapid and singular proficiency; and by early undertaking the office of an instructor himself, he acquired the means of entering himself at the University of Edinburgh. There he was first a student of theology, then a student of medicine, and was afterwards employed in the assistance and instruction of graduates in medicine, in those parts of their exercises in which the Latin language is employed. In this situation he was the contemporary and rival of the celebrated Dr. Brown, whom he resembled in the particulars of his history, as well as in the leading features of his character. The office of assistant-teacher in the High-school being vacant, it was as usual filled up by competition; and in the face of some prejudices, and perhaps of some well-founded objections, Mr. Nicol, by superior learning, carried it from all the other candidates. This office he filled at the period of which we speak.

Mr. Nicol and our poet travelled in a post-chaise, which they engaged for the journey, and passing through the heart of the Highlands, stretched northwards about ten miles beyond Inverness. There they bent their course eastward, across the island, and returned by the shore of the German Sea to Edinburgh. In the course of this tour, they visited a number of remarkable scenes, and the imagination of Burns was constantly excited by the wild and sublime scenery through which he passed. Of the history of one of these poems, *The humble petition of Bruar water*, and of the bard's visit to Athole House, the following particulars are given by Mr. Walker of Perth, then residing in the family of the Duke of Athol.

"On reaching Blair, he sent me notice of his arrival (as I had been previously acquainted with him), and I hastened to meet him at the inn. The Duke, to whom he had brought a letter of introduction, was from home; but the Duchess being informed of his arrival, gave him an invitation to sup and sleep at Athole House.

* Extract from a letter of Dr. Adair to the Editor.

"My curiosity was great to see how he would conduct himself in company so different from what he had been accustomed to.* His manner was unembarrassed, plain, and firm. He appeared to have complete reliance on his own native good sense for directing his behavior. He seemed at once to perceive and appreciate what was due to the company and to himself, and never to forget a proper respect for the separate species of dignity belonging to each. He did not arrogate conversation, but when led into it, he spoke with ease, propriety, and manliness. He tried to exert his abilities, because he knew it was ability alone gave him a title to sit there. The Duke's fine young family attracted much of his attention; he drank their healths as *honest men and bonnie lasses*, a toast which was much applauded by the company, and with which he has very felicitously closed his poem.

"Much attention was paid to Burns both before and after the Duke's return, of which he was perfectly sensible, without being vain; and at his departure I recommended to him, as the most appropriate return he could make, to write some descriptive verses on any of the scenes with which he had been so much delighted. After leaving Blair, he, by the Duke's advice, visited the *Falls of Bruar*, and in a few days I received a letter from Inverness, with the verses inclosed."

It appears that the impression made by our poet on the noble family of Athole was in a high degree favorable; it is certain he was charmed with the reception he received from them, and he often mentioned the two days he spent at Athole House as among the happiest of his life. He was warmly invited to prolong his stay, but sacrificed his inclinations to his engagement with Mr. Nicol; which is the more to be regretted, as he would otherwise have been introduced to Mr. Dundas (then daily expected on a visit to the Duke), a circumstance that might have had a favorable influence on Burns's future fortunes. At Athole House he met, for the first time, Mr. Graham of Fintry, to whom he was afterwards indebted for his office in the Excise.

The letters and poems which he addressed to Mr. Graham bear testimony of his sensibility,† and justify the supposition that he would not have been deficient in gratitude, had he been elevated to a situation better suited to his disposition and to his talents.

A few days after leaving Blair of Athole, our poet and his fellow-

* In the preceding winter, Burns had been in company of the highest rank in Edinburgh; but this description of his manners is perfectly applicable to his first appearance in such society.

† See the First and Second Epistles to Mr. Graham, soliciting an employment in the Excise.

traveller arrived at Fochabers. In the course of the preceding winter Burns had been introduced to the Duchess of Gordon at Edinburgh, and presuming on this acquaintance, he proceeded to Gordon Castle, leaving Mr. Nicol at the inn in the village. At the castle our poet was received with the utmost hospitality and kindness, and the family being about to sit down to dinner, he was invited to take his place at the table as a matter of course. This invitation he accepted, and after drinking a few glasses of wine, he rose up, and proposed to withdraw. On being pressed to stay, he mentioned, for the first time, his engagement with his fellow-traveller; and his noble host offering to send a servant to conduct Mr. Nicol to the castle, Burns insisted on undertaking that office himself. He was, however, accompanied by a gentleman, a particular acquaintance of the Duke, by whom the invitation was delivered in all the forms of politeness. The invitation, however, came too late; the pride of Nicol was inflamed to the highest degree by the neglect which he had already suffered. He had ordered the horses to be put to the carriage, being determined to proceed on his journey alone; and they found him parading the streets of Fochabers, before the door of the inn, venting his anger on the postillion, for the slowness with which he obeyed his commands. As no explanation nor entreaty could change the purpose of his fellow-traveller, our poet was reduced to the necessity of separating from him entirely, or of instantly proceeding with him on their journey. He chose the last of these alternatives; and seating himself beside Nicol in the post-chaise, with mortification and regret he turned his back on Gordon Castle; where he had promised himself some happy days. Sensible, however, of the great kindness of the noble family, he made the best return in his power by the following poem.*

Streams that glide in orient plains,
Never bound by winter's chains;
Glowing here on golden sands,
There commix'd with foulest stains
From tyranny's empurpled bands:
These, their richly-gleaming waves,
I leave to tyrants and their slaves—
Give me the stream that sweetly laves
The banks by Castle-Gordon.

Spicy forests, ever gay,
Shading from the burning ray
Hapless wretches sold to toil,
Or the ruthless native's way,
Bent on slaughter, blood, and spoil;

* This information is extracted from a letter of Dr. Couper, of Fochabers, to the Editor.

Woods that ever verdant wave,
 I leave the tyrant and the slave—
 Give me the groves that lofty brave
 The storms, by Castle-Gordon.

Wildly here, without control,
 Nature reigns and rules the whole;
 In that sober, pensive mood,
 Dearest to the feeling soul,
 She plants the forest, pours the flood;
 Life's poor day I'll musing rave,
 And find at night a sheltering cave,
 Where waters flow and wild woods wave,
 By bonnie Castle-Gordon.*

Burns remained at Edinburgh during the greater part of the winter, 1787-8, and again entered into the society and dissipation of that metropolis. It appears, that on the 31st of December, he attended a meeting to celebrate the birthday of the lineal descendant of the Scottish race of kings, the late unfortunate Prince Charles Edward. On this occasion our bard took upon himself the office of poet-laureate, and produced an ode, which, though deficient in the complicated rhythm and polished versification that such compositions require, might on a fair competition, where energy of feelings and of expression were alone in question, have won the butt of Malmsey from the real Laureate of that day.†

In relating the incidents of our poet's life in Edinburgh, we ought to have mentioned the sentiments of respect and sympathy with which he traced out the grave of his predecessor Fergusson, over whose ashes, in the Canongate churchyard, he obtained leave to erect an humble monument, which will be viewed by reflecting minds with no common interest, and which will awake in the bosom of kindred genius, many a high emotion. Neither should we pass over the continued friendship he experienced from the amiable and accomplished Blacklock. To his encouraging advice it was owing (as has already appeared) that Burns, instead of emigrating to the West Indies, repaired to Edinburgh. He received him there with all the ardor of affectionate admiration; he eagerly introduced him to the respectable circle of his friends; he consulted his interest; he blazoned his fame; he lavished upon him all the kindness of a generous and feeling heart, into which nothing selfish or envious ever found admittance. Among the friends to whom he introduced Burns was Mr. Ramsay, of Ochertyre, to whom our poet paid a visit in the autumn of 1787, at his delightful retirement in the neighborhood of Stirling, and on the banks of the Teith.

* These verses our poet composed to be sung to *Morag*, a Highland air of which he was extremely fond.

† See page 191.

On settling with his publisher, Mr. Creech, in February, 1788, Burns found himself master of nearly five hundred pounds, after discharging all his expenses. Two hundred pounds he immediately advanced to his brother Gilbert, who had taken upon himself the support of their aged mother, and was struggling with many difficulties in the farm of Mossiel. With the remainder of this sum, and some farther eventual profits from his poems, he determined on settling himself for life in the occupation of agriculture, and took from Mr. Miller, of Dalswinton, the farm of Ellisland, on the banks of the river Nith, six miles above Dumfries, on which he entered at Whitsunday, 1788. Having been previously recommended to the Board of Excise, his name had been put on the list of candidates for the humble office of a gauger, or exciseman; and he immediately applied to-acquiring the information necessary for filling that office, when the honorable Board might judge it proper to employ him. He expected to be called into service in the district in which his farm was situated, and vainly hoped to unite with success the labors of the farmer with the duties of the exciseman.

When Burns had in this manner arranged his plans for futurity, his generous heart turned to the object of his most ardent attachment, and listening to no considerations but those of honor and affection, he joined with her in a public declaration of marriage, thus legalizing their union, and rendering it permanent for life.

It was not convenient for Mrs. Burns to remove immediately from Ayrshire, and our poet therefore took up his residence alone at Ellisland, to prepare for the reception of his wife and children, who joined him towards the end of the year.

The situation in which Burns now found himself was calculated to awaken reflection. The different steps he had of late taken were in their nature highly important, and might be said to have, in some measure, fixed his destiny. He had become a husband and a father; he had engaged in the management of a considerable farm, a difficult and laborious undertaking; in his success the happiness of his family was involved; it was time, therefore, to abandon the gayety and dissipation of which he had been too much enamored: to ponder seriously on the past, and to form virtuous resolutions respecting the future.

He commenced by immediately rebuilding the dwelling-house on his farm, which, in the state he found it, was inadequate to the accommodation of his family. On this occasion, he himself resumed at times the occupation of a laborer, and found neither his strength nor his skill impaired. Pleased with surveying the grounds he was about to cultivate, and with the rearing of a building that should

give shelter to his wife and children, and, as he fondly hoped, to his own gray hairs, sentiments of independence buoyed up his mind, pictures of domestic content and peace rose on his imagination; and a few days passed away, as he himself informs us, the most tranquil, if not the happiest, which he had ever experienced.

His fame naturally drew upon him the attention of his neighbors, and he soon formed a general acquaintance in the district in which he lived. The public voice had now pronounced on the subject of his talents; the reception he had met with in Edinburgh had given him the currency which fashion bestows; he had surmounted the prejudices arising from his humble birth, and he was received at the table of the gentlemen of Nithsdale with welcome, with kindness, and even with respect. Their social parties too often seduced him from his rustic labors, and it was not long, therefore, before Burns began to view his farm with dislike and despondence, if not with disgust.

Unfortunately he had for several years looked to an office in the Excise as a certain means of livelihood, should his other expectations fail. As has already been mentioned, he had been recommended to the Board of Excise, and had received the instructions necessary for such a situation. He now applied to be employed; and by the interest of Mr. Graham, of Fintry, was appointed to be exciseman, or, as it is vulgarly called, gauger, of the district in which he lived. His farm was, after this, in a great measure, abandoned to servants, while he betook himself to the duties of his new appointment.

He might indeed still be seen in the spring directing his plough, a labor in which he excelled; or with a white sheet containing his seed-corn, slung across his shoulders, striding with measured steps along his turned-up furrows, and scattering the grain in the earth. But his farm no longer occupied the principal part of his care or his thoughts. It was not at Ellisland that he was now in general to be found. Mounted on horseback, this high-minded poet was pursuing the defaulters of the revenue among the hills and vales of Nithsdale, his roving eye wandering over the charms of nature, and *muttering his wayward fancies* as he moved along.

Besides his duties in the Excise and his social pleasures, other circumstances interfered with the attention of Burns to his farm. He engaged in the formation of a society for purchasing and circulating books among the farmers of his neighborhood, of which he undertook the management; and he occupied himself occasionally in composing songs for the musical work of Mr. Johnson, then in the course of publication. These engagements, useful and honor-

able in themselves, contributed, no doubt, to the abstraction of his thoughts from the business of agriculture.

The consequences may be easily imagined. Notwithstanding the uniform prudence and good management of Mrs. Burns, and though his rent was moderate and reasonable, our poet found it convenient, if not necessary, to resign his farm to Mr. Miller, after having occupied it three years and a half. His office in the Excise had originally produced about fifty pounds per annum. Having acquitted himself to the satisfaction of the Board, he had been appointed to a new district, the emoluments of which rose to about seventy pounds per annum. Hoping to support himself and his family on his humble income till promotion should reach him, he disposed of his stock and of his crop on Ellisland by public auction, and removed to a small house which he had taken in Dumfries, about the end of the year 1791.

Hitherto Burns, though addicted to excess in social parties, had abstained from the habitual use of strong liquors, and his constitution had not suffered any permanent injury from the irregularities of his conduct. In Dumfries, temptations to "the sin that so easily beset him" continually presented themselves; and his irregularities grew by degrees into habits. These temptations unhappily occurred during his engagements in the business of his office, as well as during his hours of relaxation; and though he clearly foresaw the consequence of yielding to them, his appetites and sensations, which could not pervert the dictates of his judgment, finally triumphed over the powers of his will.

Still, however, he cultivated the society of persons of taste and respectability, and in their company could impose upon himself the restraints of temperance and decorum. Nor was his muse dormant. In the four years which he lived at Dumfries, he produced many of his beautiful lyrics, though it does not appear that he attempted any poem of considerable length.

Burns had entertained hopes of promotion in the Excise; but circumstances occurred which retarded their fulfilment, and which, in his own mind, destroyed all expectation of their being ever fulfilled. The extraordinary events which ushered in the revolution of France interested the feelings, and excited the hopes, of men in every corner of Europe. Prejudice and tyranny seemed about to disappear from among men, and the day-star of reason to rise upon a benighted world. In the dawn of this beautiful morning, the genius of French freedom appeared on our southern horizon with the countenance of an angel, but speedily assumed the features of a demon, and vanished in a shower of blood.

Though previously a Jacobite and a cavalier, Burns had shared

in the original hopes entertained of this astonishing revolution by ardent and benevolent minds. The novelty and the hazard of the attempt meditated by the First, or Constituent Assembly, served rather, it is probable, to recommend it to his daring temper; and the unfettered scope proposed to be given to every kind of talents was doubtless gratifying to the feelings of conscious but indignant genius. Burns foresaw not the mighty ruin that was to be the immediate consequence of an enterprise, which, on its commencement, promised so much happiness to the human race. And even after the career of guilt and of blood commenced, he could not immediately, it may be presumed, withdraw his partial gaze from a people who had so lately breathed the sentiments of universal peace and benignity, or obliterate in his bosom the pictures of hope and of happiness to which those sentiments had given birth. Under these impressions, he did not always conduct himself with the circumspection and prudence which his dependent situation seemed to demand. He engaged indeed in no popular associations, so common at the time of which we speak; but in company he did not conceal his opinions of public measures, or of the reforms required in the practice of our government: and sometimes, in his social and unguarded moments, he uttered them with a wild and unjustifiable vehemence. Information of this was given to the Board of Excise, with the exaggerations so general in such cases. A superior officer in that department was authorized to inquire into his conduct. Burns defended himself in a letter addressed to one of the Board, written with great independence of spirit, and with more than his accustomed eloquence. The officer appointed to inquire into his conduct gave a favorable report. His steady friend, Mr. Graham, of Fintry, interposed his good offices in his behalf; and the imprudent gauger was suffered to retain his situation, but given to understand that his promotion was deferred, and must depend on his future behavior.

This circumstance made a deep impression on the mind of Burns. Fame exaggerated his misconduct, and represented him as actually dismissed from his office; and this report induced a gentleman of much respectability to propose a subscription in his favor. The offer was refused by our poet in a letter of great elevation of sentiment, in which he gives an account of the whole of this transaction, and defends himself from the imputation of disloyal sentiments on the one hand, and on the other from the charge of having made submissions for the sake of his office, unworthy of his character.

In the midst of all his wanderings, Burns met nothing in his domestic circle but gentleness and forgiveness, except in the gnawings of his own remorse. He acknowledged his transgressions to the

wife of his bosom, promised amendment, and again received pardon for his offences. But as the strength of his body decayed, his resolution became feebler, and habit acquired predominating strength.

From October, 1795, to the January following, an accidental complaint confined him to the house. A few days after he began to go abroad, he dined at a tavern, and returned about three o'clock in a very cold morning, benumbed and intoxicated. This was followed by an attack of rheumatism, which confined him about a week. His appetite now began to fail; his hand shook, and his voice faltered on any exertion or emotion. His pulse became weaker and more rapid, and pain in the larger joints, and in the hands and feet, deprived him of the enjoyment of refreshing sleep. Too much dejected in his spirits, and too well aware of his real situation to entertain hopes of recovery, he was ever musing on the approaching desolation of his family, and his spirits sunk into a uniform gloom.

It was hoped by some of his friends, that if he could live through the months of spring, the succeeding season might restore him. But they were disappointed. The genial beams of the sun infused no vigor into his languid frame; the summer wind blew upon him, but produced no refreshment. About the latter end of June he was advised to go into the country, and, impatient of medical advice, as well as of every species of control, he determined for himself to try the effects of bathing in the sea. For this purpose he took up his residence at Brow, in Annandale, about ten miles east of Dumfries, on the shore of the Solway-Frith.

At first, Burns imagined bathing in the sea had been of benefit to him; the pains in his limbs were relieved; but this was immediately followed by a new attack of fever. When brought back to his own house in Dumfries, on the 18th July, he was no longer able to stand upright. At this time a tremor pervaded his frame: his tongue was parched, and his mind sunk into delirium, when not roused by conversation. On the second and third day the fever increased, and his strength diminished. On the fourth, the sufferings of this great but ill-fated genius were terminated, and a life was closed in which virtue and passion had been at perpetual variance.

The death of Burns made a strong and general impression on all who had interested themselves in his character, and especially on the inhabitants of the town and country in which he had spent the latter years of his life. The Gentlemen-Volunteers of Dumfries determined to bury their illustrious associate with military honors, and every preparation was made to render this last service solemn and impressive. The Fencible Infantry of Angus-shire, and the

regiment of cavalry of the Cinque Ports, at that time quartered in Dumfries, offered their assistance on this occasion; the principal inhabitants of the town and neighborhood determined to walk in the funeral procession; and a vast concourse of persons assembled, some of them from a considerable distance, to witness the obsequies of the Scottish Bard. On the evening of the 25th of July, the remains of Burns were removed from his house to the Town Hall, and the funeral took place on the succeeding day. A party of the Volunteers, selected to perform the military duty in the churchyard, stationed themselves in the front of the procession with their arms reversed; the main body of the corps surrounded and supported the coffin, on which were placed the hat and sword of their friend and fellow-soldier; the numerous body of attendants ranged themselves in the rear; while the Fencible regiments of infantry and cavalry lined the streets from the Town Hall to the burial-ground in the Southern churchyard, a distance of more than half a mile. The whole procession moved forward to that sublime and affecting strain of music, the *Dead March* in Saul: and three volleys fired over his grave marked the return of Burns to his parent earth! The spectacle was in a high degree grand and solemn, and according with the general sentiments of sympathy and sorrow which the occasion had called forth.

It was an affecting circumstance, that, on the morning of the day of her husband's funeral, Mrs. Burns was undergoing the pains of labor, and that during the solemn service we have just been describing, the posthumous son of our poet was born. This infant boy, who received the name of Maxwell, was not destined to a long life. He has already become an inhabitant of the same grave with his celebrated father.

The sense of his poverty, and of the approaching distress of his infant family, pressed heavily on Burns as he lay on the bed of death. Yet he alluded to his indigence, at times, with something approaching to his wonted gayety.—“What business,” said he to Dr. Maxwell, who attended him with the utmost zeal, “has a physician to waste his time on me? I am a poor pigeon not worth plucking. Alas! I have not feather enough upon me to carry me to my grave.” And when his reason was lost in delirium, his ideas ran in the same melancholy train: the horrors of a jail were continually present to his troubled imagination, and produced the most affecting exclamations.

On the death of Burns, the inhabitants of Dumfries and its neighborhood opened a subscription for the support of his wife and family. The subscription was extended to other parts of Scotland, and of England also, particularly London and Liverpool. By

this means a sum was raised amounting to seven hundred pounds; and thus the widow and children were rescued from immediate distress, and the most melancholy of the forebodings of Burns happily disappointed.

Burns, as has already been mentioned, was nearly five feet ten inches in height, and a form that indicated agility as well as strength. His well-raised forehead, shaded with black curling hair, indicated extensive capacity. His eyes were large, dark, full of ardor and intelligence. His face was well formed; and his countenance uncommonly interesting and expressive. The tones of his voice happily corresponded with the expression of his features, and with the feelings of his mind. When to these endowments are added a rapid and distinct apprehension, a most powerful understanding, and a happy command of language—of strength as well as brilliancy of expression—we shall be able to account for the extraordinary attractions of his conversation—for the sorcery which, in his social parties, he seemed to exert on all around him. In the company of women this sorcery was more especially apparent. Their presence charmed the fiend of melancholy in his bosom, and awoke his happiest feelings; it excited the powers of his fancy, as well as the tenderness of his heart; and, by restraining the vehemence and the exuberance of his language, at times gave to his manners the impression of taste, and even of elegance, which in the company of men they seldom possessed. This influence was doubtless reciprocal.

WE conclude with the character of Burns as given by his countryman, Mr. Allan Cunningham, which is alike creditable to his taste, and does justice to the illustrious fame of the poet:—

As a poet, Burns stands in the first rank: his conceptions are original; his thoughts new and weighty; his manner unborrowed; and even his language is his own. He owes no honor to his subjects, for they are all of an ordinary kind, such as humble life around him presented: he sought neither in high station nor in history for matter to his muse, and yet all his topics are simple, natural, and to be found without research. The Scottish bards who preceded him selected subjects which obtained notice from their oddity, and treated them in a way singular and outré. The verses of the first and fifth James, as well as those of Ramsay and Fergusson, are chiefly a succession of odd and ludicrous pictures, as true as truth itself, and no more. To their graphic force of de-

lineation Burns added sentiment and passion, and an elegant tenderness and simplicity. He took topics familiar to all; the Daisy grew on the lands he ploughed; the Mouse built her nest on his own stubble-field; the Haggis smoked on his own board; the Scotch Drink which he sung was distilled on the banks of Doon; the Dogs that conversed so wittily and wisely were his own collies; Tam O'Shanter was a merry husbandman of his own acquaintance; and even the "De'il himsel" was familiar to all, and had often alarmed, by his eldritch croon and the marks of his cloven foot, the pastoral people of Kyle. Burns was the first who taught the world that in lowly subjects high poetry resided. Touched by him, they were lifted at once into the regions of inspiration. His spirit ascended into an humble topic, as the sap of spring ascends a tree to endow it with beauty and fragrance.

Burns is our chief national Poet; he owes nothing of the structure of his verse or of the materials of his poetry to other lands—he is the offspring of the soil; he is as natural to Scotland as the heath is to her hills, and all his brightness, like our nocturnal aurora, is of the north. Nor has he taken up fleeting themes; his song is not of the external manners and changeable affections of man—it is of the human heart—of the mind's hopes and fears, and of the soul's aspirations. Others give us the outward form and pressure of society—the court-costume of human nature—the laced lapelle and the epauleted shoulder. He gives us flesh and blood; all he has he holds in common with mankind, yet all is national and Scottish. We can see to whom other bards have looked up for inspiration—like fruit of the finest sort, they smack of the stock on which they were grafted. Burns read Young, Thomson, Shenstone, and Shakspeare; yet there is nothing of Young, Thomson, Shenstone, or Shakspeare about him; nor is there much of the old ballad. His light is of nature, like sunshine, and not reflected. When, in after-life, he tried imitation, his "Epistle to Grahame of Fintray" showed satiric power and polish little inferior to Dryden.

He is not only the truest and best of Scottish Poets, but, in ease, fire, and passion, he is second to none save Shakspeare. I know of no one besides, whose verse flows forth so sparkling and spontaneous. On the lines of other bards, we see the marks of care and study—now and then they are happy, but they are as often elaborated out and brightened like a key by frequent handling. Burns is seldom or never so—he wrote from the impulse of nature—he wrote because his passions raged like so many demons till they got vent in rhyme. Others sit and solicit the muse, like a coy mistress, to be kind; she came to Burns "unsent for," like the "bonnie lass" in the song, and showered her favors freely.

The strength was equal to the harmony; rugged westlin words were taken from the lips of the weaver and the ploughman, and adorned with melody and feeling; and familiar phrases were picked up from shepherds and mechanics, and rendered as musical as is Apollo's lute. "I can think of no verse since Shakspeare's," said Pitt to Henry Addington, "which comes so sweetly and at once from nature." "Out of the eater came forth meat:"—the premier praised whom he starved. Burns was not a poet by fits and starts; the mercury of his genius stood always at the inspired point; like the fairy's drinking cup, the fountain of his fancy was ever flowing and ever full. He had, it is true, set times and seasons when the fruits of his mind were more than usually abundant; but the songs of spring were equal to those of summer—those of summer were not surpassed by those of autumn; the quantity might be different, the flavor and richness were ever the same.

His variety is equal to his originality. His humor, his gayety, his tenderness, and his pathos, come all in a breath; they come freely, for they come of their own accord; nor are they huddled together at random, like doves and crows in a flock; the contrast is never offensive; the comic slides easily into the serious, the serious into the tender, and the tender into the pathetic. The witch's cup, out of which the wondering rustic drank seven kinds of wine at once, was typical of the muse of Burns. It is this which has made him welcome to all readers. "No poet," says Scott, "with the exception of Shakspeare, ever possessed the power of exciting the most varied and discordant emotions with such rapid transitions."

Notwithstanding the uncommon ease and natural elegance of his musings—the sweet and impassioned tone of his verse—critics have not been wanting who perceived in his works the humility of his origin. His poems, I remember well enough, were considered by many, at first, as the labors of some gentleman who assumed the rustic for the sake of indulging in satire; their knowledge was reckoned beyond the reach, and their flights above the power, of a simple ploughman. Something of this belief may be seen in Mrs. Scott of Wauchope's letter: and when it was known for a truth that the author was a ploughman, many lengthy discussions took place concerning the way in which the Poet had acquired his knowledge. Ayr race-course was pointed out as the likely scene of his studies of high life, where he found what was graceful and elegant. When Jeffrey wrote his depreciating criticism, he forgot that Burns had studied politeness in the very school where he himself was polished:

"I've been at drunken writers' feasts,"

claims a scholarship which the critic might have respected. If sharp epigrams, familiar gallantry, love of independence, and a leaning to the tumid be, as that critic assures us, true symptoms of vulgar birth, then Swift was a scavenger, Rochester a coalheaver, Pope a carman, and Thomson a boor. He might as well see lowness of origin in the James Stuart who wrote "Christ's Kirk on the Green," as in the Robert Burns who wrote "Tam O'Shanter." The nature which Burns infused into all he wrote deals with internal emotions: feeling is no more vulgar in a ploughman than in a prince.

In all this I see the reluctance of an accomplished scholar to admit the merits of a rustic poet who not only claimed, but took, the best station on the Caledonian Parnassus. It could be no welcome sight to philosophers, historians, and critics, to see a peasant, fragrant from the furrow, elbowing his way through their polished ranks to the highest place of honor, exclaiming—

"What's a' your jargon o' your schools?"

Some of them were no doubt astonished and incensed; nature was doing too much: they avenged themselves by advising him to leave his vulgar or romantic fancies and grow classical. His best songs they called random flights; his happiest poems the fruit of a vagrant impulse; they accounted him an accident—"a wild colt of a comet"—a sort of splendid error: and refused to look upon him as a true poet, raised by the kindly warmth of nature; for they thought nothing beautiful which was not produced or adorned by learning.

Burns is a thorough Scotchman: his nationality, like cream on milk, floats on the surface of all his works; it mingles in his humor as well as in his tenderness; yet it is seldom or never offensive to an English ear; there is nothing narrow-souled in it. He rejoices in Scotland's ancient glory and in her present strength: he bestows his affection on her heathery mountains, as well as on her romantic vales; he glories in the worth of her husbandmen, and in the loveliness of her maidens. The bracken glens and thistly brae-sides of the North are more welcome to his sight than are the sunny dales of Italy, fragrant with ungathered grapes; its men, if not quite divinities, are more than mortal; and the women are clothed in beauty, and walk in a light of their own creating; a haggis is food fit for gods; brose is a better sort of ambrosia; "wi' twopenny we fear nae evil;" and whiskey not only makes us insensible of danger, but inspires noble verse and heroic deeds. There is something at once ludicrous and dignified in all this: to excite mingled emotions was the aim of the Poet. Besides a love

of country, there is an intense love of freedom about him: not the savage joy in the boundless forest and the unlicensed range, but the calm determination and temperate delight of a reflecting mind. Burns is the bard of liberty—not that which sets fancy free and fetters the body; he resists oppression—he covets free thought and speech—he scorns slavish obedience to the mob as much as he detests tyranny in the rulers. He spoke out like a bold-inspired person; he knew his word would have weight with the world, and sung his “Man’s a man for a’ that,” as a watchword to future generations—as a spell against slavery.

The best poems of Burns are about rural and pastoral life, and relate the hopes, joys, and aspirations, of that portion of the people falsely called the humble, as if grandeur of soul were a thing “born in the purple,” and not the free gift and bounty of heaven. The passions and feelings of man are disguised, not changed, in polished society; flesh and blood are the same beneath hoddin’ gray as beneath three-piled velvet. This was what Burns alluded to when he said he saw little in the splendid circles of Edinburgh which was new to him. His pictures of human life and of the world are of a mental as well as national kind. His “Twa Dogs” prove that happiness is not unequally diffused: “Scotch Drink” gives us fireside enjoyments; the “Earnest Cry and Prayer” shows the keen eye which humble people cast on their rulers; the “Address to the Deil” indulges in religious humanities, in which sympathy overcomes fear; “The Auld Mare,” and “The Address to Mailie,” enjoin, by the most simple and touching examples, kindness and mercy to dumb creatures; “The Holy Fair” desires to curb the licentiousness of those who seek amusement instead of holiness in religion; “Man was made to Mourn” exhorts the strong and the wealthy to be mindful of the weak and the poor; “Halloween” shows us superstition in a domestic aspect; “Tam O’Shanter” adorns popular belief with humorous terror, and helps us to laugh old dreads away; “The Mouse,” in its weakness, contrasts with man in his strength, and preaches to us the instability of happiness on earth; while “The Mountain Daisy” pleads with such moral pathos the cause of the flowers of the field sent by God to adorn the earth for man’s pleasure, that our feet have pressed less ungraciously on the “wee, modest, crimson-tipped flower,” since his song was written.

Others of his poems have a still grander reach. “The Vision” reveals the Poet’s plan of Providence, proves the worth of eloquence, bravery, honesty, and beauty, and that even the rustic bard himself is a useful and ornamental link in the great chain of being. “The Cotter’s Saturday Night” connects us with the invisible world, and shows that domestic peace, faithful love, and patri-

otic feelings are of earthly things most akin to the joys of heaven; while the divine "Elegy on Matthew Henderson" unites human nature in a bond of sympathy with the stars of the sky, the fowls of the air, the beasts of the field, the flowery vale, and the lonely mountain. The hastiest of his effusions has a wise aim; and the eloquent Curran perceived this when he spoke of the "sublime morality of Burns."

Had Burns, in his poems, preached only so many moral sermons, his audience might have been a select, but it would have been a limited, one. The sublimest truths, like the surest medicines, are sometimes uneasy to swallow: for this the Poet provided an effectual remedy: he associated his moral counsel with so much tenderness and pathos, and garnished it all about with such exquisite humor, that the public, like the giant drinking the wine in Homer, gaped, and cried, "More! this is divine!" If a reader has such a limited soul as to love humor only, why Burns is his man—he has more of it than any modern poet; should he covet tenderness, he cannot read far in Burns without finding it to his mind; should he desire pathos, the Scottish Peasant has it of the purest sort; and if he wish for them altogether let him try no other bard—for in what other poet will he find them woven more naturally into the web of song? It is by thus suiting himself to so many minds and tastes, that Burns has become such a favorite with the world; if, in a strange company, we should chance to stumble in quoting him, an English voice, or an Irish one, corrects us; much of the business of life is mingled with his verse; and the lover, whether in joy or sorrow, will find that Burns has anticipated every throb of his heart:—

"Every pulse along his veins,
And every roving fancy."

He was the first of our northern poets who brought deep passion and high energy to the service of the muse, who added sublimity to simplicity, and found loveliness and elegance dwelling among the cottages of his native land. His simplicity is graceful as well as strong; he is never mean, never weak, never vulgar, and but seldom coarse. All he says is above the mark of other men: his language is familiar, yet dignified; careless, yet concise; and he touches on the most ordinary—nay, perilous themes, with a skill so rare and felicitous, that good fortune seems to unite with good taste in helping him through the Slough of Despond, in which so many meaner spirits have wallowed. No one has greater power in adorning the humble, and dignifying the plain—no one else has so happily picked the sweet fresh flowers of poesy from among the thorns and brambles of the ordinary paths of existence.

"The excellence of Burns," says Thomas Carlyle, a true judge, "is, indeed, among the rarest, whether in poetry or prose; but at the same time it is plain and easily recognized—his sincerity—his indisputable air of truth. Here are no fabulous woes or joys; no hollow fantastic sentimentalities; no wire-drawn refinings either in thought or feeling: the passion that is traced before us has glowed in a living heart; the opinion he utters has risen in his own understanding, and been a light to his own steps. He does not write from hearsay, but from sight and experience: it is the scenes he has lived and labored amidst that he describes; those scenes, rude and humble as they are, have kindled beautiful emotions in his soul, noble thoughts, and definite resolves; and he speaks forth what is in him, not from any outward call of vanity or interest, but because his heart is too full to be silent. He speaks it, too, with such melody and modulation as he can—in homely rustic jingle—but it is his own, and genuine. This is the grand secret for finding readers, and retaining them: let him who would move and convince others, be first moved and convinced himself."

It must be mentioned, in abatement of this high praise, that Burns occasionally speaks with too little delicacy. He violates without necessity the true decorum of his subject, and indulges in hidden meanings and allusions, such as the most tolerant cannot applaud. Nor is this the worst: he is much too free in his treatment of matters holy. He ventures to take the Deity to task about his own passions, and the order of nature, in a way less reverent than he employs when winning his way to woman's love. He has, in truth, touches of profanity which make the pious shudder. In the warmth of conversation such expressions might escape from the lips; but they should not have been coolly sanctioned in the closet with the pen. These deformities are not, however, of frequent occurrence; and, what is some extenuation, they are generally united to a noble or natural sentiment. He is not profane or indecorous for the sake of being so: his faults, as well as his beauties, come from an overflowing fulness of mind.

His songs have all the beauties, and none of the faults, of his poems. As compositions to be sung, a finer and more scientific harmony, and a more nicely-modulated dance of words were required, and Burns had both in perfection. They flow as readily to the music as if both the air and verse had been created together, and blend and mingle like two uniting streams. The sentiments are from nature; and they never, in any instance, jar or jangle with the peculiar feeling of the music. While humming the air over during the moments of composition, the words came and took their proper places, each according to the meaning of the air: rugged

expressions could not well mingle with thoughts inspired by harmony.

In his poems, Burns supposes himself in the society of men, and indulges in reckless sentiments and unmeasured language: in his songs he imagines himself in softer company: when woman's eye is on him he is gentle, persuasive, and impassioned; he is never boisterous; he seeks not to say fine things, yet he never misses saying them; his compliments are uttered of free will, and all his thoughts flow naturally from the subject. There is a natural grace and fascination about his songs; all is earnest and from the heart: he is none of your millinery bards who deal in jewelled locks, laced garments, and shower pearls and gems by the bushel on youth and beauty. He makes bright eyes, flushing cheeks, the music of the tongue, and the pulses' maddening play, do all. Those charms he knew came from heaven, and not out of the tirewoman's basket, and would last when fashions changed. It is remarkable that the most naturally elegant and truly impassioned songs in the language were written by a ploughman-lad in honor of the rustic lasses around him.

If we regard the songs of Burns as so many pastoral pictures, we will find that he has an eye for the beauties of nature as accurate and as tasteful as the happiest landscape painter. Indeed, he seldom gives us a finished image of female loveliness without the accompaniment of blooming flowers, running streams, waving woods, and the melody of birds: this is the framework which sets off the portrait. He has recourse rarely to embellishments borrowed from art; the lighted hall and the thrilling strings are less to him than a walk with her he loves by some lonely rivulet's side, when the dews are beginning to glisten on the lilies and weigh them down, and the moon is moving not unconsciously above them. In all this we may recognize a true poet—one who felt that woman's loveliness triumphed over these fragrant accompaniments, and who regarded her still as the "blood-royal of life," the brightest part of creation.

Those who desire to feel, in their full force, the songs of Burns, must not hope it from scientific singers in the theatres. The right scene is the pastoral glen; the right tongue for utterance is that of a shepherd lass; and the proper song is that which belongs to her present feelings. The gowany glen, the nibbling sheep, the warbling birds, and the running stream, give the inanimate, while the singer herself personates the living beauty of the song. I have listened to a country girl singing one of his songs, while she spread her webs to bleach by a running stream—ignorant of her audience—with such feeling and effect as were quite overpowering.

This will keep the fame of Burns high among us; should the printer's ink dry up, ten thousand melodious tongues will preserve his songs to remote generations.

The variety, too, of his lyrics is equal to their truth and beauty. He has written songs which echo the feelings of every age and condition in life. He personates all the passions of man and all the gradations of affection. He sings the lover hastening through storm and tempest to see the object of his attachment—the swelling stream, the haunted wood, and the suspicious parents, are all alike disregarded. He paints him again on an eve of July, when the air is calm, the grass fragrant, and no sound is abroad save the amorous cry of the partridge, enjoying the beauty of the evening as he steals by some unfrequented way to the trysting thorn, whither his mistress is hastening; or he limns him on a cold and snowy night, enjoying a brief parley with her whom he loves, from a cautiously opened window, which shows her white arm and bright eyes, and the shadow perhaps of a more fortunate lover, which accounts for the marks of feet impressed in the snow on the way to her dwelling. Nor is he always sighing and vowing: some of his heroes answer scorn with scorn, are saucy with the saucy, and proud with the proud, and comfort themselves with sarcastic comments on woman and her fickleness and folly; others drop all allegiance to that fantastic idol beauty, and while mirth abounds, and “the wine-cup shines in light,” find wondrous solace. He laughs at the sex one moment, and adores them the next—he ridicules and satirizes—he vows and entreats—he traduces and he defies—all in a breath. Burns was intimate with the female heart, and with the romantic mode of courtship practised in the pastoral districts of Caledonia. He was early initiated into all the mysteries of rustic love, and had tried his eloquence with such success among the maidens of the land, that one of them said, “Open your eyes and shut your ears with Rob Burns, and there’s nae fear o’ your heart; but close your eyes and open your ears, and you’ll lose it.”

Of all lyric poets he is the most prolific and various. Of one hundred and sixty songs which he communicated to Johnson’s Museum, all, save a score or so, are either his composition, or amended with such skill and genius as to be all but made his own. For Thomson he wrote little short of a hundred. He took a peculiar pleasure in ekeing out and amending the old and imperfect songs of his country. He has exercised his fancy and taste to a greater extent that way than antiquarians either like or seem willing to acknowledge. Scott, who performed for the ballads of Scotland what Burns did for many of her songs, perceived this:—

"The Scottish tunes and songs," he remarked, "preserved for Burns that inexpressible charm which they have ever afforded to his countrymen. He entered into the idea of collecting their fragments with the zeal of an enthusiast; and few, whether serious or humorous, passed through his hands without receiving some of those magic touches, which, without greatly altering the song, restored its original spirit, or gave it more than it previously possessed. So dexterously are those touches combined with the ancient structure, that the *rifacimento*, in many instances, could scarcely have been detected without the avowal of the Bard himself. Neither would it be easy to mark his share in the individual ditties. Some he appears to have entirely rewritten; to others he added supplementary stanzas; in some he retained only the leading lines and the chorus; and others he merely arranged and ornamented." No one has ever equalled him in these exquisite imitations: he caught up the peculiar spirit of the old song at once; he thought as his elder brother in rhyme thought, and communicated an antique sentiment and tone to all the verses which he added. Finer feeling, purer fancy, more exquisite touches of nature, and more vigorous thoughts, were the result of this intercourse. Burns found Scottish song like a fruit-tree in winter, not dead, though unbudded; nor did he leave it till it was covered with bloom and beauty. He sharpened the sarcasm, deepened the passion, heightened the humor, and abated the indelicacy of his country's lyrics.

"To Burns's ear," says Wilson—a high judge in all poetic questions—"the lowly lays of Scotland were familiar, and most dear were they all to his heart. Often had he 'sung aloud old songs that are the music of the heart;' and, some day, to be able himself to breathe such strains was his dearest, his highest ambition. His genius and his moral frame were thus imbued with the spirit of our old traditionary ballad poetry; and, as soon as all his passions were ripe, the voice of song was on all occasions of deep and tender interest—the voice of his daily, his nightly speech. Those old songs were his models; he felt as they felt, and looked up with the same eyes on the same objects. So entirely was their language his language, that all the beautiful lines, and half-lines, and single words that, because of something in them most exquisitely true to nature, had survived the rest of the compositions to which they had long ago belonged, were sometimes adopted by him, almost unconsciously it might seem, in his finest inspirations; and oftener still sounded in his ear like a key-note, on which he pitched his own plaintive tune of the heart till the voice and language of the old and new days were but as one." He never failed to surpass what he

imitated; he added fruit to the tree and fragrance to the flower. That his songs are a solace to Scottish hearts in far lands we know from many sources; the poetic testimony of an inspired witness is all we shall call for at present:—

“ Encamped by Indian rivers wild,
The soldier, resting on his arms,
In Burns's carol sweet recalls
The scenes that blessed him when a child,
And glows and gladdens at the charms
Of Scotia's woods and waterfalls.”

A want of chivalry has been instanced as a radical fault in the lyrics of Burns. He certainly is not of the number who appear with beauty with much awe or reverence, and who raise loveliness to an idol for man to fall down and worship. The polished court and romantic affectations of high society had not found their way among the maidens of Kyle; the midnight tryste, and the stolen interview—the rapture to meet—and the anguish to part—the secret vow, and the scarce audible whisper, were dear to their bosoms; and they were unacquainted with moving in parallel lines, and breathing sighs into roses, in the affairs of the heart. To draw a magic circle of affection round those he loved, which could not be passed without lowering them from the station of angels, forms no part of the lyrical system of Burns's poetic wooing: there is no affectation in him; he speaks like one unconscious of the veneered and varnished civilities of artificial life; he feels that true love is unacquainted with fashionable distinctions, and in all he has written has thought but of the natural man and woman, and the uninfluenced emotions of the heart. Some have charged him with a want of delicacy—an accusation easily answered: he is rapturous, he is warmed, he is impassioned—his heart cannot contain its ecstasies; he glows with emotion as a crystal goblet with wine; but in none of his best songs is there the least indelicacy. Love is with him a leveller; passion and feeling are of themselves as little influenced by fashion and manners as the wind is in blowing, or the sun is in shining; chivalry, and even notions of delicacy, are changeable things; our daughters speak no longer with the free tongues of their great-grandmothers, and young men no longer challenge wild lions, or keep dangerous castles, in honor of their ladies' eyes.

The prose of Burns has much of the original merit of his poetry; but it is seldom so pure, so natural, and so sustained. It abounds with bright bits, fine outflashings, gentle emotions, and uncommon warmth and ardor. It is very unequal; sometimes it is simple and vigorous; now and then inflated and cumbrous; and he not seldom labors to say weighty and decided things, in which a “double

double toil and trouble" sort of labor is visible. "But hundreds even of his most familiar letters"—I adopt the words of Wilson—"are perfectly artless, though still most eloquent compositions. Simple we may not call them, so rich are they in fancy, so overflowing in feeling, and dashed off in every other paragraph with the easy boldness of a great master, conscious of his strength even at times when, of all things in the world, he was least solicitous about display; while some there are so solemn, so sacred, so religious, that he who can read them with an unstirred heart can have no trust, no hope, in the immortality of the soul." Those who desire to feel him in his strength must taste him in his Scottish spirit. There he spoke the language of life: in English, he spoke that of education; he had to think in the former before he could express himself in the latter. In the language in which his mother sung and nursed him he excelled; a dialect reckoned barbarous by scholars, grew classic and elevated when uttered by the tongue of ROBERT BURNS.

Of the family and fame of the Poet something should be said. Good and active friends bestirred themselves after his death: Currie munificently wrote his Life and edited his works; Robert, his eldest son, was placed in the Stamp-office by Lord Sidmouth; cadetships in India were generously obtained for William and James by Sir James Shaw, who otherwise largely befriended the family; and Lord Panmure nobly presented one hundred pounds annually to his widow, till the success of her sons in India enabled them to interpose, and take—not without remonstrance—that pious duty on themselves. The venerable Mrs. Burns lives* in the house where her eminent husband died: all around her has an air of comfort, and she has been enabled to save a small sum out of her annual income: her brother, a London merchant of much respectability, has long interested himself in her affairs; and her brother-in-law, Gilbert, died lately, after having established his family successfully in the world.

The citizens of my native Dumfries feel the honor which the Poet's ashes confer on them; Mill-hole-brae has been named Burns-street: the walks are revered where he loved to muse; and his grave may be traced by the well-trodden pathways which pass the unnoticed tombs of the learned, the pious, the brave, and the far-descended, and lead to that of the inspired Peasant. Honors have elsewhere been liberally paid to his name; a fair monument is raised to him on the Doon; a noble statue, from the hand of Flaxman, stands in Edinburgh; and Burns-clubs celebrate his

* Mrs. Burns died 1834.

birthday in the chief towns and cities of Britain. On the banks of the Amazon, Mississippi, St. Lawrence, Indus, and the Ganges, his name is annually invoked and his songs sung; Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Campbell, have celebrated him in verse; statues are made from his chief characters; pictures painted from his vivid delineations; and even the rafters of Alloway-kirk have been formed into ornaments for the necks of ladies, and quaighs for the hands of men. Such is the influence of genius!

The following beautiful tribute to the memory of Burns is by Mr. Roscoe:

Rear high thy bleak majestic hills,
 Thy sheltered valleys proudly spread,
 And, Scotia, pour thy thousand rills,
 And wave thy heaths with blossoms red:
 But, ah! what poet now shall tread
 Thy airy heights, thy woodland reign,
 Since he, the sweetest bard, is dead,
 That ever breathed the soothing strain!

As green thy towering pines may grow,
 As clear thy streams may speed along,
 As bright thy summer suns may glow,
 As gayly charm thy feathery throng;
 But now, unheeded is the song,
 And dull and lifeless all around,
 For his wild harp lies all unstrung,
 And cold the hand that waked its sound.

What though thy vigorous offspring rise,
 In arts, in arms, thy sons excel;
 Though beauty in thy daughters' eyes,
 And health in every feature dwell;
 Yet who shall now their praises tell,
 In strains impassioned, fond, and free,
 Since he no more the song shall swell
 To love, and liberty, and thee!

With step-dame eye and frown severe
 His hapless youth why didst thou view?
 For all thy joys to him were dear,
 And all his vows to thee were due:
 Nor greater bliss his bosom knew,
 In opening youth's delightful prime,
 Than when thy favoring ear he drew
 To listen to his chanted rhyme.

Thy lonely wastes and frowning skies
 To him were all with rapture fraught:
 He heard with joy the tempest rise
 That waked him to sublimer thought;

And oft thy winding dells he sought,
Where wild-flowers poured their rath perfume,
And with sincere devotion brought
To thee the summer's earliest bloom.

But ah ! no fond maternal smile
His unprotected youth enjoyed ;
His limbs inured to early toil,
His days with early hardships tried !
And more to mark the gloomy void,
And bid him feel his misery,
Before his infant eyes would glide
Day-dreams of immortality.

Yet, not by cold neglect depressed,
With sinewy arm he turned the soil,
Sunk with the evening sun to rest,
And met at morn his earliest smile.
Waked by his rustic pipe meanwhile,
The powers of fancy came along,
And soothed his lengthened hours of toil
With native wit and sprightly song.

— Ah ! days of bliss too swiftly fled,
When vigorous health from labor springs,
And bland Contentment soothes the bed,
And Sleep his ready opiate brings;
And hovering round on airy wings
Float the light forms of young Desire,
That of unutterable things
The soft and shadowy hope inspire.

Now spells of mightier power prepare,
Bid brighter phantoms round him dance;
Let Flattery spread her viewless snare,
And Fame attract his vagrant glance:
Let sprightly Pleasure too advance,
Unveiled her eyes, unclasped her zone,
Till lost in love's delirious trance,
He scorn the joys his youth has known.

Let Friendship pour her brightest blaze,
Expanding all the bloom of soul;
And Mirth concentrate all her rays,
And point them from the sparkling bowl;
And let the careless moments roll
In social pleasures unconfined,
And confidence that spurns control
Unlock the inmost springs of mind !

And lead his steps those bowers among,
Where elegance with splendor vies,
Or Science bids her favored throng
To more refined sensations rise :
Beyond the peasant's humbler joys,
And freed from each laborious strife,
There let him learn the bliss to prize
That waits the sons of polished life.

Then, whilst his throbbing veins beat high
With every impulse of delight,
Dash from his lips the cup of joy,
And shroud the scene in shades of night ;
And let Despair with wizard light
Disclose the yawning gulf below,
And pour incessant on his sight
Her spectred ills and shapes of woe :
And show beneath a cheerless shed,
With sorrowing heart and streaming eyes
In silent grief where droops her head,
The partner of his early joys ;
And let his infants' tender cries
His fond parental succor claim,
And bid him hear in agonies
A husband's and a father's name.
'Tis done, the powerful charm succeeds ;
His high reluctant spirit bends ;
In bitterness of soul he bleeds,
Nor longer with his fate contends.
An idiot laugh the welkin rends,
As Genius thus degraded lies ;
Till pitying Heaven the veil extends
That shrouds the Poet's ardent eyes.
Rear high thy bleak majestic hills,
Thy shelter'd valleys proudly spread,
And, Scotia, pour thy thousand rills,
And wave thy heaths with blossoms red ;
But never more shall poet tread
Thy airy heights, thy woodland reign,
Since he, the sweetest bard, is dead
That ever breathed the soothing strain.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE following trifles are not the production of the poet, who, with all the advantages of learned art, and perhaps amid the elegances and idlenesses of upper life, looks down for a rural theme, with an eye to Theocritus or Virgil. To the Author of this, these and other celebrated names, their countrymen, are, at least in their original language, *a fountain shut up, and a book sealed*. Unacquainted with the necessary requisites for commencing poet by rule, he sings the sentiments and manners he felt and saw in himself and his rustic compeers around him, in his and their native language. Though a rhymer from his earliest years, at least from the earliest impulses of the softer passion, it was not till very lately that the applause, perhaps the partiality, of friendship, wakened his vanity so far as to make him think any thing of his worth showing ; and none of the following works were composed with a view to the press. To amuse himself with the little creations of his own fancy, amid the toil and fatigues of a laborious life ; to transcribe the various feelings, the loves, the griefs, the hopes, the fears, in his own breast ; to find some kind of counterpoise to the struggles of a world, always an alien scene, a task uncouth to the poetical mind ;—these were his motives for courting the Muses, and in these he found Poetry to be its own reward.

Now that he appears in the public character of an Author, he does it with fear and trembling. So dear is fame to the rhyming tribe, that even he, an obscure, nameless Bard, shrinks aghast at the thought of being branded as—an impertinent blockhead, obtruding his nonsense on the world ; and, because he can make a shift to jingle a few doggerel Scottish rhymes

together, looking upon himself as a Poet of no small consequence forsooth!

It is an observation of that celebrated poet, Shenstone, whose divine Elegies do honor to our language, our nation, and our species, that “*Humility* has depressed many a genius to a hermit, but never raised one to fame!” If any critic catches at the word *genius*, the Author tells him, once for all, that he certainly looks upon himself as possessed of some poetic abilities, otherwise his publishing in the manner he has done would be a manœuvre below the worst character, which, he hopes, his worst enemy will ever give him. But to the genius of a Ramsay, or the glorious dawns of the poor, unfortunate Ferguson, he with equal, unaffected sincerity, declares, that even in his highest pulse of vanity, he has not the most distant pretensions. These two justly admired Scottish Poets he has often had in his eye in the following pieces; but rather with a view to kindle at their flame, than for servile imitation.

To his Subscribers, the Author returns his most sincere thanks—not the mercenary bow over a counter—but the heart-throbbing gratitude of the Bard, conscious how much he owes to benevolence and friendship, for gratifying him, if he deserves it, in that dearest wish of every poetic bosom—to be distinguished. He begs his readers, particularly the learned and the polite, who may honor him with a perusal, that they will make every allowance for education and circumstances of life; but if, after a fair, candid, and impartial criticism, he shall stand convicted of dullness and nonsense, let him be done by as he would in that case do by others—let him be condemned, without mercy, to contempt and oblivion.

DEDICATION TO THE SECOND EDITION.

TO THE NOBLEMEN AND GENTLEMEN OF THE CALEDONIAN HUNT.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN—

A SCOTTISH Bard, proud of the name, and whose highest ambition is to sing in his Country's service—where shall he so properly look for patronage as to the illustrious names of his native Land—those who bear the honors and inherit the virtues of their Ancestors? The Poetic Genius of my Country found me, as the prophetic bard Elijah did Elisha—at the plough; and threw her inspiring mantle over me. She bade me sing the loves, the joys, the rural scenes and rural pleasures of my native soil in my native tongue. I tuned my wild, artless notes as she inspired. She whispered me to come to this ancient Metropolis of Caledonia, and lay my songs under your honored protection.

Though much indebted to your goodness, I do not approach you, my Lords and Gentlemen, in the usual style of Dedication, to thank you for past favors. That path is so hackneyed by prostituted learning, that honest rusticity is ashamed of it. Nor do I present this address with the venal soul of a servile Author, looking for a continuation of those favors. I was bred to the plough, and am independent. I come to claim the common Scottish name with you, my illustrious countrymen; and to tell the world that I glory in the title. I come to congratulate my Country that the blood of her ancient heroes still runs uncontaminated; and that from your courage, knowledge, and public spirit, she may expect protection, wealth, and liberty. In the last place, I come to proffer my warmest wishes to the great Fountain of honor, the Monarch of the universe, for your welfare and happiness.

When you go forth to waken the Echoes, in the ancient and favorite amusement of your forefathers, may Pleasure ever be of your party; and may social Joy await your return! When harassed in courts or camps with the jostlings of bad men and bad measures, may the honest consciousness of injured worth attend your return to your native Seats; and may domestic Happiness, with a smiling welcome, meet you at your gates! May Corruption shrink at your kindling, indignant glance! and may Tyranny in the Ruler, and Licentiousness in the People, equally find you an inexorable foe!

I have the honor to be,
With the sincerest gratitude, and highest respect,
My Lords and Gentlemen,
Your most devoted, humble Servant,
ROBERT BURNS.

Edinburgh, April 4, 1787.

P O E M S,
CHIEFLY SCOTTISH.

THE TWA DOGS.

A TALE.

'Twas in that place o'¹ Scotland's isle,
That bears the name o' Auld King Coil,
Upon a bonnie day in June,
When wearing thro' the afternoon,
Twa dogs that were na thrang at hame,²
Forgather'd³ ance upon a time.

The first I'll name, they ca'd him *Cæsar*,
Was keepit for his honor's pleasure;
His hair, his size, his mouth, his lugs,⁴
Show'd he was nane o' Scotland's dogs,
But whalpit⁵ some place far abroad,
Where sailors gang to fish for cod.

His locked, letter'd, braw⁶ brass collar,
Show'd him the gentleman and scholar;
But though he was o' high degree,
The fient' a pride nae pride had he;
But wad hae⁷ spent an hour caressin',
Ev'n wi' a tinkler-gipsy's messin':⁸
At kirk or market, mill or smiddie,¹⁰
Nae tawted¹¹ tyke,¹² tho' e'er sae duddie,¹³
But he wad stan't,¹⁴ as glad to see him,
And stroan't¹⁵ on stanes and hillocks¹⁶ wi' him.

The tither¹⁷ was a ploughman's collie,¹⁸
A rhyming, ranting, roaring billie,¹⁹

¹ Of.—² Had nothing to do at home.—³ Met.—⁴ Ears.—⁵ Whelped.—
⁶ Large, handsome.—⁷ Fiend, devil.—⁸ Would have.—⁹ A small dog.—
¹⁰ Smithy, or smith's workshop.—¹¹ Having the hair matted together.—
¹² Dog.—¹³ Ragged.—¹⁴ Stand, or stop.—¹⁵ To piss.—¹⁶ Stones and little
hills.—¹⁷ The other.—¹⁸ A country cur.—¹⁹ A young fellow.

Wha for his friend an' comrade had him,
 And in his freaks had *Luath* ca'd him,
 After some dog in Highland sang,¹
 Was made lang syne²—Lord knows how lang.

He was a gash³ and faithful tyke,
 As ever lap⁴ a sheugh⁵ or dyke.
 His honest, sonsie,⁶ baws'nt⁷ face,
 Ay gat him friends in ilka⁸ place.
 His breast was white, his touzie⁹ back
 Weel clad wi' coat o' glossy black;
 His gawcie¹⁰ tail, wi' upward curl,
 Hung o'er his hurdies¹¹ wi' a swirl.¹²

Nae doubt but they were fain o' ither,¹³
 An' unco pack and thick¹⁴ thegither;
 Wi' social nose whyles¹⁵ snuff't and snowkit,¹⁶
 Whyles¹⁷ mice and moudieworts¹⁸ they howkit;¹⁹
 Whyles scour'd awa in lang excursion,
 An' worried ither in diversion;
 Until wi' daffin²⁰ weary grown,
 Upon a knowe²¹ they sat them down,
 And there began a lang digression
 About the *Lords o' the Creation*.

CÆSAR.

I've aften wonder'd, honest Luath,
 What sort o' life poor dogs like you have;
 An' when the gentry's life I saw,
 What way poor bodies liv'd ava.²²

Our laird gets in his racked rents,
 His coals, his kain,²³ and a' his stents:²⁴
 He rises when he likes himsel;
 His flunkies²⁵ answer at the bell:
 He ca's²⁶ his coach, he ca's his horse;
 He draws a bonnie silken purse
 As lang 's my tail, where, thro' the steeks,²⁷
 The yellow-letter'd Geordie keeks.²⁸

¹ Cuchullin's dog in Ossian's Fingal. — ² Long since. — ³ Sagacious. —
⁴ Leaped. — ⁵ Trench, or sluice. — ⁶ Engaging. — ⁷ Having a white stripe down
the face. — ⁸ Every. — ⁹ Shaggy. — ¹⁰ Large. — ¹¹ Loins. — ¹² Curve. — ¹³ Fond
of each other. — ¹⁴ And very intimate. — ¹⁵ Sometimes. — ¹⁶ Scented. —
¹⁷ Sometimes. — ¹⁸ Moles. — ¹⁹ Digged. — ²⁰ Merriment, foolishness. — ²¹ A
small hillock. — ²² At all. — ²³ Fowls, &c., paid as rent by a farmer. — ²⁴ Trib-
ute, dues of any kind. — ²⁵ Livery-servants. — ²⁶ Calls. — ²⁷ Stitches. — ²⁸ Peeps.

Frae morn to e'en it's nought but toiling,
 At baking, roasting, frying, boiling;
 An' tho' the gentry first are stechin',¹
 Yet ev'n the ha' folk² fill their pechan³
 Wi' sauce, ragouts, and sic like thrastrie,
 That's little short o' downright wastrie.
 Our whipper-in, wee⁴ blastit⁵ wonner,⁶
 Poor worthless elf, it eats a dinner,
 Better than onie tenant man
 His honor has in a' the lan':
 An' what poor cot-folk pit' their painch⁸ in,
 I own it's past my comprehension.

LUATH.

Trowth, Cæsar, whyles they're fasht⁹ eneugh,
 A cotter howkin¹⁰ in a sheugh,¹¹
 Wi' dirty stanes biggin'¹² a dyke,
 Baring a quarry, and sic like,
 Himself, a wife, he thus sustains,
 A smytrie¹³ o' wee duddie weans,¹⁴
 An' nought but his han' darg,¹⁵ to keep
 Them right and tight in thack an' rape.¹⁶
 An' when they meet wi' sair disasters,
 Like loss o' health or want o' masters,
 Ye maist wad think a wee touch langer,
 An' they maun¹⁷ starve o' cauld and hunger.
 But how it comes I never kenn'd yet,
 They're maistly wonderfu' contented;
 And buirdly chiels,¹⁸ and clever hizzies,¹⁹
 Are bred in sic a way as this is.

CÆSAR.

But then to see how ye're negleckit,
 How huff'd, and cuff'd, and disrespeckit!
 L—d, man, our gentry care but little
 For delvers, ditchers, and sic cattle;
 They gang as saucy by poor folk,
 As I wad by a stinking brock.²⁰

¹ Cramming.—² Hall-folk, servants.—³ Stomach.—⁴ Little.—⁵ Blasted.—
⁶ A contemptuous appellation.—⁷ Put.—⁸ Paunch.—⁹ Troubled.—¹⁰ Digging.
 —¹¹ Trench.—¹² Building.—¹³ A numerous collection of small individuals.
 —¹⁴ Ragged children.—¹⁵ Day's work.—¹⁶ Clothing, necessities.—¹⁷ Must.
 —¹⁸ Stout-made young men.—¹⁹ Hussies, young women.—²⁰ A badger.

I've noticed, on our laird's court-day,
 And monie a time my heart's been wae,
 Poor tenant bodies, scant o' cash,
 How they maun thole¹ a factor's snash:²
 He'll stamp an' threaten, curse an' swear,
 He'll apprehend them, poind³ their gear;
 While they maun stan', wi' aspect humble,
 An' hear it a', an' fear an' tremble!

I see how folk live that hae riches;
 But surely poor folk maun be wretches?

LUATH.

They're nae sae wretched's ane wad think;
 Tho' constantly on poortith's⁴ brink:
 They're sae accustom'd wi' the sight,
 The view o't gies them little fright.

Then chance an' fortune are sae guided,
 They're ay in less or mair provided;
 An' tho' fatigued wi' close employment,
 A blink o' rest's a sweet enjoyment.

The dearest comfort o' their lives,
 Their grushie⁵ weans⁶ an' faithfu' wives;
 The prattling things are just their pride,
 That sweetens a' their fireside.

An' whyles twalpennie-worth o' nappie⁷
 Can make the bodies unco⁸ happy;
 They lay aside their private cares,
 To mind the kirk and state affairs;
 They'll talk o' patronage and priests,
 Wi' kindling fury in their breasts,
 Or tell what new taxation's comin',
 An' ferlie⁹ at the folk in Lon'on.

As bleak-faced Hallowmas returns,
 They get the jovial, rantin' kirns,¹⁰
 When *rural life* o' every station,
 Unite in common recreation:
 Love blinks, wit slaps, and social mirth,
 Forgets there's care upo' the earth.

That merry day the year begins,
 They bar the door on frosty winds;

¹ Suffer, endure.—² Abuse.—³ To seize for rent.—⁴ Poverty.—⁵ Of thriving growth.—⁶ Children.—⁷ Ale.—⁸ Very.—⁹ Wonder.—¹⁰ The harvest supper.

The nappie reeks wi' mantling ream,¹
 And sheds a heart-inspiring steam;
 The luntin² pipe, and sneeshin' mill,³
 Are handed round wi' right guid will;
 The cantie⁴ auld folks cracking crouse,⁵
 The young anes ranting thro' the house—
 My heart has been sae fain⁶ to see them,
 That I for joy hae barkit⁷ wi' them.

Still it's owre⁸ true that ye hae said,
 Sic game is now owre aften play'd.
 There's monie a creditable stock
 O' decent, honest, fawsont⁹ folk,
 Are riven out baith root and branch,
 Some rascal's pridefu' greed¹⁰ to quench,
 Wha thinks to knit himsel the faster
 In favor wi' some gentle master,
 Wha, aiblins,¹¹ thrang a-parliamentin',
 For Britain's guid¹² his saul indentin'¹³—

CÆSAR.

Haith,¹⁴ lad, ye little ken about it;
For Britain's guid! guid faith I doubt it:
 Say rather, gaun¹⁵ as Premiers lead him,
 An' saying *aye* or *no*'s they bid him:
 At operas an' plays parading,
 Mortgaging, gambling, masquerading;
 Or maybe, in a frolic daft,¹⁶
 To Hague or Calais takes a waft,
 To make a tour, and tak a whirl,
 To learn *bon ton*, an' see the worl'.

There at Vienna or Versailles,
 He rives¹⁷ his father's auld entails;
 Or by Madrid he takes the rout,
 To thrum guitars, an' fecht¹⁸ wi' nowt;¹⁹
 Or down Italian vista startles,
 Wh-re-hunting among groves o' myrtles:
 Then bouses drumly²⁰ German water,
 To mak himsel look fair and fatter,

¹ To foam, or froth.—² Smoking.—³ Snuff-box.—⁴ Cheerful.—⁵ Conversing merrily.—⁶ Glad, happy.—⁷ Shouted, hallooed.—⁸ Over.—⁹ Respectable.—¹⁰ Avarice, selfishness.—¹¹ Perhaps.—¹² Good.—¹³ Making a bargain, or selling his vote for seven years.—¹⁴ A petty oath.—¹⁵ Going.—¹⁶ Mad, foolish.—¹⁷ Divides and squanders.—¹⁸ Fight.—¹⁹ Black cattle; in allusion to the Spanish bull-fights.—²⁰ Muddy.

An' clear the consequential sorrows,
 Love-gifts of carnival signoras.
For Britain's guid! for her destruction!
 Wi' dissipation, feud, an' faction.

LUATH.

Hech¹ man! dear sirs! is that the gate²
 They waste sae monie a braw³ estate!
 Are we sae foughten⁴ an' harass'd
 For gear to gang that gate at last!

O, would they stay aback frae courts,
 An' please themselves wi' countra⁵ sports,
 It wad for ev'ry ane be better,
 The laird, the tenant, an' the cotter!⁶
 For thae⁷ frank, rantin', ramblin' billies,⁸
 Fient haet⁹ o' them 's ill-hearted fellows:
 Except for breakin' o' their timmer,¹⁰
 Or speakin' lightly o' their limmer,¹¹
 Or shootin' o' a hare or moor-cock,
 The ne'er a bit they're ill to poor folk.

But will you tell me, master Cæsar,
 Sure great folk's life 's a life o' pleasure?
 Nae cauld or hunger e'er can steer them,
 The very thought o't need na fear them.

CÆSAR.

L—d, man, were ye but whyles¹² whare I am,
 The gentles ye wad ne'er envy 'em.

It's true they need na starve or sweat,
 Thro' winter's cauld, or simmer's heat;
 They 've nae sair wark to craze their banes,
 An' fill auld age wi' gripes an' granes:
 But human bodies are sic fools,
 For a' their colleges and schools,
 That when nae real ills perplex them,
 They make enow themsels to vex them;
 An' ay the less they hae to sturt¹³ them,
 In like proportion less will hurt them.
 A country fellow at the pfeugh,
 His acre 's till'd, he 's right enough;
 A country-girl at her wheel,

¹ Oh! strange.—² The way.—³ Large.—⁴ Troubled.—⁵ Country.—⁶ Cot-tager.—⁷ These.—⁸ Young men.—⁹ A petty oath of negation.—¹⁰ Timber.—
¹¹ A strumpet, or kept mistress.—¹² Sometimes.—¹³ To trouble or molest.

Her dizzen 's' done, she 's unco weel :²
 But gentlemen, an' ladies warst,
 Wi' ev'ndown want o' wark are curst ;
 They loiter, lounging, lank, an' lazy ;
 Tho' deil haet³ ails them, yet uneasy ;
 Their days insipid, dull, an' tasteless ;
 Their nights unquiet, lang, an' restless :
 An' e'en their sports, their balls, an' races,
 Their galloping thro' public places ;
 There 's sic⁴ parade, sic pomp an' art,
 The joy can scarcely reach the heart.
 The men cast out in party matches,
 Then souther⁵ a' in deep debauches ;
 Ae⁶ night they 're mad wi' drink an' wh-ring,
 Niest⁷ day their life is past enduring.
 The ladies arm-in-arm in clusters,
 As great and gracious a' as sisters ;
 But hear their absent thoughts o' ither,
 They 're a' run deils⁸ an' jades thegither.
 Whyles o'er the wee bit cup an' platie,⁹
 They sip the scandal potion pretty :
 Or lee-lang¹⁰ nights, wi' crabbit leuks,
 Pore owre the devil's pictur'd beuks ;¹¹
 Stake on a chance a farmer's stack-yard,
 An' cheat like onie unhang'd blackguard.

There 's some exception, man an' woman ;
 But this is gentry's life in common.

By this, the sun was out o' sight,
 An' darker gloaming¹² brought the night ;
 The bum-clock¹³ humm'd wi' lazy drone ;
 The kye¹⁴ stood routin' i' the loan ;¹⁵
 When up they gat, and shook their lugs,¹⁶
 Rejoiced they were na *men* but *dogs* ;
 An' each took aff his several way,
 Resolved to meet some ither day.

¹ A dozen.—² Very happy.—³ The deuce of any thing.—⁴ Such.—⁵ Solder, cement.—⁶ One.—⁷ Next.—⁸ Right-down devils.—⁹ Cup and saucer.—
¹⁰ Live-long.—¹¹ Playing cards.—¹² Twilight.—¹³ A humming beetle that flies in the summer evenings.—¹⁴ Cows.—¹⁵ Lowing in the place of milking.—
¹⁶ Ears.

TAM O' SHANTER.

A TALE.

Of Brownys and of Bogills full is this Buke.—*Gavin Douglas.*

WHEN chapman billies¹ leave the street,
And drouthy neebors neebors meet,
As market-days are wearing late,
An' folk begin to tak the gate;²
While we sit bousing at the nappy,
An' getting fou and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps,³ and styles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Whare sits our sulky, sullen dame,
Gath'ring her brows like gath'ring storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand⁴ honest *Tam o' Shanter*,
As he, frae Ayr, ae⁵ night did canter,
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,
For honest men and bonnie lasses.)

O Tam! hadst thou but been sae wise,
As taen thy ain wife Kate's advice!
She tauld thee weel thou was a skellum,⁶
A bleth'ring, blust'ring, drunken blellum;⁷
That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou was na sober,
That ilka⁸ melder,⁹ wi' the miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller:
That every naig was ca'd a shoe on,
The smith and thee gat roaring fou¹⁰ on:
That at the L—d's house, ev'n on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirton Jean till Monday.
She prophesied, that, late or soon,
Thou would be found deep drown'd in Doon;
Or catch'd wi' warlocks¹¹ in the mirk,¹²
By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.

¹ Hawkers, or peddlers.—² To go their way.—³ Gates.—⁴ Found.—⁵ One.—

⁶ A worthless fellow.—⁷ A nonsensical, idle-talking fellow.—⁸ Every.—⁹ A grist, or small quantity of corn taken to the mill to be ground.—¹⁰ Drunk.—

¹¹ Wizards.—¹² Dark.

Ah, gentle dames! it gars me grêet,¹
 To think how monie counsels sweet,
 How monie lengthen'd sage advices,
 The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale: Ae² market night,
 Tam had got planted unco right,
 Fast by an ingle,³ bleezing finely,
 Wi' reaming swats,⁴ that drank divinely;
 And at his elbow souter⁵ Johnny,
 His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony;
 Tam lo'ed him like a vera brither;
 They had been fou for weeks thegither.
 The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter;
 And ay the ale was growing better:
 The landlady and Tam grew gracious,
 Wi' favors secret, sweet, and precious;
 The souter tauld his queerest stories;
 The landlord's laugh was ready chorus;
 The storm without might rair⁶ and rustle,
 Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
 E'en drown'd himself amang the nappy;
 As bees flee hame wi' lades⁷ o' treasure,
 The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure;
 Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
 O'er a' the ills o' life victorious.

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
 You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed;
 Or like the snow-falls in the river,
 A moment white—then melts forever;
 Or like the borealis race,
 That flit ere you can point their place;
 Or like the rainbow's lovely form,
 Evanishing amid the storm—
 Nae man can tether time or tide;
 The hour approaches Tam maun ride;
 That hour o' night's black arch the key-stane,
 That dreary hour he mounts his beast in;
 And sic a night he takes the road in,
 As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

¹ Makes me weep.—² One.—³ Fireplace.—⁴ Frothing ale.—⁵ A shoemaker.

⁶ Roar.—⁷ Loads.

The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last;
 The rattling showers rose on the blast;
 The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd;
 Loud, deep, and lang, the thunder bellow'd:
 That night a child might understand,
 The Deil had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his gray mare, Meg,
 (A better never lifted leg,)
 Tam skelpit¹ on thro' dub and mire,
 Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
 Whyles² holding fast his guid blue bonnet;
 Whyles crooning³ o'er some auld Scots sonnet;
 Whyles glow'ring⁴ round wi' prudent cares,
 Lest bogles⁵ catch him unawares;
 Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
 Where ghaists and houlets⁶ nightly cry.—

By this time he was cross the ford,
 Where in the snaw the chapman⁷ smoor'd;⁸
 And past the birks⁹ and meikle stane,¹⁰
 Where drunken Charlie brak's neck bane;
 And thro' the whins,¹¹ and by the cairn,¹²
 Where hunters fand¹³ the murder'd bairn;
 And near the thorn, aboon¹⁴ the well,
 Where Mungo's mither hang'd hersel.—
 Before him Doon pours all his floods;
 The doubling storm roars thro' the woods;
 The lightnings flash from pole to pole;
 Near and more near the thunders roll;
 When glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
 Kirk-Alloway seem'd in a bleeze;
 Thro' ilka¹⁵ bore¹⁶ the beams were glancing;
 And loud resounded mirth and dancing.—

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn!
 What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
 Wi' tippenny,¹⁷ we fear nae evil;
 Wi' usquabae,¹⁸ we'll face the Devil!—
 The swats sae ream'd¹⁹ in Tammie's noddle,
 Fair play, he cared na Deils a bodle.²⁰

¹ Galloped.—² Sometimes.—³ Humming a tune.—⁴ Looking.—⁵ Spirits, hobgoblins.—⁶ Owls.—⁷ A travelling peddler.—⁸ Was smothered.—⁹ Birch trees.—¹⁰ A large stone.—¹¹ Furze.—¹² A heap of stones.—¹³ Found.—¹⁴ Above.—¹⁵ Every.—¹⁶ A hole in the wall.—¹⁷ Ale.—¹⁸ Whisky.—¹⁹ The ale so foamed.—²⁰ A small copper coin.

But Maggie stood right sair astonish'd,
 Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,
 She ventured forward on the light;
 And, vow! Tam saw an unco¹ sight;
 Warlocks² and witches in a dance;
 Nae cotillon brent new³ frae France,
 But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
 Put life and mettle in their heels.
 A winnock-bunker⁴ in the east,
 There sat auld Nick, in shape o' beast;
 A towzie tyke,⁵ black, grim, and large,
 To gie them music was his charge;
 He screw'd the pipes and gart⁶ them skirl,⁷
 Till roof an' rafters a' did dirl.⁸—
 Coffins stood round like open presses,
 That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses;
 And by some devilish cantrip⁹ slight,
 Each in its cauld hand held a light,—
 By which, heroic Tam was able
 To note upon the haly¹⁰ table,
 A murderer's banes in gibbet airns;¹¹
 Twa span-lang, wee,¹² unchristen'd bairns;
 A thief, new cutted fra a rape,¹³
 Wi' his last gasp his gab¹⁴ did gape;
 Five tomahawks, wi' bluid red rusted;
 Five scymitars, wi' murder crusted;
 A garter, which a babe had strangled;
 A knife a father's throat had mangled,
 Whom his ain son o' life bereft,
 The gray hairs yet stack to the heft;
 Three lawyers' tongues turn'd inside out,
 Wi' lies seam'd like a beggar's clout,
 And priests' hearts, rotten, black as muck,
 Lay stinking, vile, in every neuk:
 Wi' mair o' horrible and awfu',
 Which ev'n to name wad be unlawfu'.
 As Tammie glower'd,¹⁵ amazed and curious,
 The mirth and fun grew fast and furious;
 The piper loud and louder blew;

¹ Strange, frightful.—² Wizards.—³ Quite new.—⁴ Window-seat.—⁵ A shaggy dog.—⁶ Made, forced.—⁷ To make a shrill noise.—⁸ Tremble.—⁹ A charm or spell.—¹⁰ Holy.—¹¹ Irons.—¹² Little.—¹³ Rope.—¹⁴ Mouth.—
¹⁵ Stared.

The dancers quick and quicker flew ;
 They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,¹
 Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,²
 And coost her duddies³ to the wark,
 And linket⁴ at it in her sark.⁵

Now Tam, O Tam! had they been queans,
 A' plump and strapping in their teens;
 Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flannen,⁶
 Been snaw-white seventeen-hunder linen;⁷
 Thir⁸ breeks o' mine, my only pair,
 That ance were plush, o' guid blue hair,
 I wad hae gi'en them aff my hurdies,⁹
 For ae blink o' the bonnie burdies!¹⁰

But wither'd beldams, auld and droll,
 Rigwoodie hags¹¹ wad spean a¹² foal,
 Lowping¹³ an' flinging on a crummock,¹⁴
 I wonder did na turn thy stomach.

But Tam kenn'd what was what fu' brawlie,¹⁵
 There was ae winsome¹⁶ wench and walie,¹⁷
 That night inlisted in the core,
 (Lang after kenn'd¹⁸ on Carrick shore!
 For monie a beast to dead she shot,
 And perish'd monie a bonnie boat,
 And shook baith meikle corn and bear,¹⁹
 And kept the country-side in fear,)
 Her cutty-sark²⁰ o' Paisley harn,²¹
 That while a lassie she had worn,
 In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
 It was her best, and she was vauntie.²²
 Ah! little kenn'd²³ thy reverend grannie,
 That sark she coft²⁴ for her wee Nannie,
 Wi' twa pund Scots²⁵ ('twas a' her riches),
 Wad ever graced a dance o' witches!

But here my Muse her wing maun cower;
 Sic flights are far beyond her power;
 To sing how Nannie lap²⁶ and flang,

¹ Caught.—² Till every old woman was in a reeking sweat.—³ Cast off her rags.—⁴ Tripped.—⁵ Shirt.—⁶ Greasy flannel.—⁷ Linen of the finest quality.—⁸ These.—⁹ The loins, &c.—¹⁰ Plural of burd, a damsel.—¹¹ Gallows hags.—¹² To wean.—¹³ Leaping.—¹⁴ A cow with crooked horns.—¹⁵ Full well.—¹⁶ One hearty.—¹⁷ Jolly.—¹⁸ Seen or known.—¹⁹ Much corn and barley.—²⁰ Short shirt.—²¹ Paisley linen.—²² Proud of it.—²³ Thought, or knew.—²⁴ Bought.—²⁵ Two pounds Scotch, 8s. 4d. sterling.—²⁶ Leaped.

(A souple jad she was and strang,
 And how Tam stood, like ane bewitch'd,
 And thought his very een enrich'd;
 Ev'n Satan glower'd,¹ and fidget fu' fain,²
 And hotch'd and blew wi' might and main:
 Till first ae caper, syne³ anither,
 Tam tint⁴ his reason a' thegither,
 And roars out, *Weel done, Outty-sark!*⁵
 And in an instant a' was dark:
 And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
 When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees biz out wi' angry fyke,⁶
 When plundering herds assail their byke;⁷
 As open pussie's⁸ mortal foes,
 When, pop! she starts before their nose;
 As eager runs the market-crowd,
 When *Catch the thief!* resounds aloud;
 So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
 Wi' monie an eldritch⁹ skreech and hollow.

Ah, Tam! ah, Tam! thou'll get thy fairin'¹⁰
 In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin'!
 In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin'!
 Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!
 Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
 And win the key-stane¹¹ of the brig:
 There at them thou thy tail may toss,
 A running stream they dare na cross.
 But ere the key-stane she could make,
 The fient a tail she had to shake;
 For Nannie, far before the rest,
 Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
 And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;¹²
 But little wist she Maggie's mettle—
 Ae spring brought aff her master hale,

¹ Looked on with rapture.—² Manifested a fidgety kind of joy or pleasure.—
³ Then.—⁴ Lost.—⁵ Short shirt.—⁶ In a great fuss.—⁷ A bee-hive.—⁸ A hare,
⁹ Frightful, ghastly.—¹⁰ Get the reward of thy temerity.

¹¹ It is a well-known fact, that witches, or any evil spirits, have no power to follow a poor wight any farther than the middle of the next running stream. It may be proper likewise to mention to the benighted traveller, that when he falls in with *bogles*, whatever danger may be in his going forward, there is much more hazard in turning back.

¹² Attempt.

But left behind her ain gray tail:
 The carlin claught' her by the rump,
 And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.
 Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
 Ilk² man and mother's son take heed:
 Whene'er to drink you are inclined,
 Or cutty-sarks run in your mind,
 Think, ye may buy the joys o'er dear,
 Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.³

¹ Laid hold of.—² Every.

³ Died at Lochwinnoch, on the 9th inst. (August, 1823,) Thomas Reid, laborer. He was born on the 21st of October, 1745, in the clachan of Kyle, Ayrshire. The importance attached to this circumstance arises from his being the celebrated equestrian hero of Burns's Poem "Tam O'Shanter." He has at length surmounted the "mosses, rivers, slaps, and styles" of life. For a considerable time by-past he has been in the service of Major Hervey, of Castle-Semple, nine months of which he has been incapable of labor; and to the honor of Mr. Hervey be it named, he has, with a fostering and laudable generosity, soothed, as far as it was in his power, the many ills of age and disease. He, however, still retained the desire of being "fou' for weeks thegither."—*Glasgow Chronicle*. Another version of this story is the following: That Tam O'Shanter was no imaginary character. Shanter is a farm near the village of Kirkoswald, where Burns, when nineteen years old, studied mensuration, and "first became acquainted with scenes of swaggering riot." The then occupier of Shanter, by name "Douglas Grahame," was, by all accounts, equally what the *Tam* of the poet appears—a jolly, careless rustic, who took much more interest in the contraband traffic of the coast, then carried on, than in the rotation of crops. Burns knew the man well; and to his dying day, he, nothing loath, passed among his rural compeers by the name of "Tam O'Shanter."—*Lockhart's Life of Burns*.

This admirable tale was written for Grose's "Antiquities of Scotland," where it first appeared, with a beautiful engraving of "Alloway's auld haunted Kirk."

DEATH AND DR. HORNBOOK.

A TRUE STORY.

[The following circumstance occasioned the composition of this poem:—
 “The schoolmaster of Tarbolton parish, to eke up the scanty subsistence
 allowed to that useful class of men, had set up a shop of grocery goods.
 Having accidentally fallen in with some medical books, and become most
 hobby-horsically attached to the study of medicine, he had added the sale of
 a few medicines to his little trade. He had got a shop-bill printed, at the
 bottom of which, overlooking his own incapacity, he had advertised, that
 ‘Advice would be given in common disorders at the shop gratis.’”—*Lockhart's Life of Burns.*]

SOME books are lies frae end to end,
 And some great lies were never penn'd;
 Ev'n ministers, they hae been kenn'd,
 In holy rapture,
 A rousing whid,¹ at times, to vend,
 And nail 't wi' Scripture.

But this that I am gaun to tell,
 Which lately on a night befel,
 Is just as true 's the deil 's in hell,
 Or Dublin city:
 That e'er he nearer comes oursel
 's a muckle pity.

The clachan yill² had made me canty,³
 I was na fou,⁴ but just had plenty;
 I stacher'd⁵ whyles, but yet took tent⁶ ay
 To free the ditches;
 An' hillocks, stanes, and bushes kenn'd ay
 Frae ghaists⁷ and witches.

The rising moon began to glower⁸
 The distant Cumnock hills out-owre;
 To count her horns wi' a' my power,
 I set mysel;
 But whether she had three or four,
 I cou'd na tell.

¹ A lie.—² Village ale.—³ Merry.—⁴ Drunk.—⁵ Staggered.—⁶ Took heed.
 —⁷ From ghosts.—⁸ To shine faintly.

I was come round about the hill,
 And todlin'¹ down on Willie's mill,
 Setting my staff wi' a' my skill,
 To keep me sicker;²
 Tho' leeward whyles, against my will,
 I took a bicker.³

I there wi' *something* did forgather⁴
 That put me in an eerie swither;⁵
 An awfu' scythe out-owre æ shouther,
 Clear, dangling hang;
 A three-taed leister⁶ on the ither
 Lay, large an' lang.

Its stature seem'd lang Scotch ells twa,
 The queerest shape that e'er I saw,
 For fient a wame⁷ it had ava!⁸
 And then, its shanks,
 They were as thin, as sharp, an' sma'
 As cheeks o' branks!⁹

"Guid-e'en," quo' I; "Friend! hae ye been mawin'
 When ither folk are busy sawin'?"¹⁰
 It seem'd to mak a kind o' stan',
 But naething spak;
 At length, says I, "Friend, whare ye gaun,
 Will ye go back?"

It spak right howe¹¹—"My name is Death,
 But be na fley'd."¹²—Quoth I, "Guid faith!
 Ye're maybe come to stap my breath;
 But tent me, billie;¹³
 I red¹⁴ ye weel, tak care o' scaith,¹⁵
 See there's a gully!"¹⁶

"Gudeman," quo' he, "put up your whittle,
 I'm no design'd to try its metal;
 But if I did, I wad be kittle¹⁷
 To be mislear'd;¹⁸

¹ Tottering.—² Steady.—³ A short run.—⁴ Meet.—⁵ Frightful hesitation.
 —⁶ A three-pronged dart.—⁷ Belly.—⁸ At all.—⁹ A kind of wooden curb for
 norses.—¹⁰ This rencounter happened in seed-time, 1785.—¹¹ with a hollow
 tone of voice.—¹² Frightened.—¹³ Heed me, good fellow.—¹⁴ To counsel, or
 advise.—¹⁵ Injury.—¹⁶ A large knife.—¹⁷ Ticklish, difficult.—¹⁸ Mischievous;
i. e. it would be no easy matter for you to hurt, or do me any mischief.

I wad na mind it, no that spittle
Out-owre my beard."

"Weel, weel!" says I, "a bargain be't;
Come, gie's your hand, an' sae we're gree't;¹
We'll ease our shanks an' tak a seat,
Come, gie's your news;
This while² ye hae been monie a gate,³
At monie a house."

"Ay, ay!" quo' he, an' shook his head,
"It's e'en a lang, lang time indeed,
Sin' I began to nick the thread,
An' choke the breath:
Folk maun do something for their bread,
An' sae maun Death.

"Sax thousand years are near hand fled
Sin' I was to the butchering⁴ bred,
An' monie a scheme in vain's been laid,
To stap or scaur⁵ me;
Till ane Hornbook's⁶ taen up the trade,
An' faith, he'll waur⁷ me.

"Ye ken Jock Hornbook i' the clachan,⁸
Deil mak his king's-hood⁹ in a spleuchan!¹⁰
He's grown sae weel acquaint wi' Buchan¹¹
An' ither chaps,
The weans¹² haud out their fingers laughin',
An' pouk my hips.

"See here's a scythe, and there's a dart,
They hae pierced monie a gallant heart;
But Doctor Hornbook, wi' his art
And cursed skill,
Has made them baith no worth a f—t,
Damn'd haet¹³ they'll kill!

¹ Agreed.—² An epidemical fever was then raging in that part of the country.—³ Many a road.—⁴ Butchering.—⁵ Stop or scare.

⁶ This gentleman, Dr. Hornbook, is professionally a brother of the sovereign Order of the Ferula; but, by intuition and inspiration, is at once an apothecary, surgeon, and physician.

⁷ Worst, or defeat.—⁸ Hamlet, or village.—⁹ A part of the entrails.—¹⁰ A tobacco pouch.—¹¹ Buchan's Domestic Medicine.—¹² Children.

¹³ An oath of negation; *i. e.* in Dr. Hornbook's opinion he has rendered my weapons harmless; they'll kill nobody.

" 'Twas but yestreen,¹ nae farther gane,
 I threw a noble throw at ane;
 Wi' less I'm sure I've hundreds slain;
 But Deil-ma-care,²
 It just play'd dirl³ on the bane,
 But did nae mair.

"Hornbook was by, wi' ready art,
 And had sae fortified the part,
 That when I looked to my dart,
 It was sae blunt,
 Fient haet⁴ o' 't wad hae pierced the heart
 Of a kail-runt.⁵

"I drew my scythe in sic a fury,
 I near had cowpit⁶ wi' my hurry,
 But yet the bauld apothecary
 Withstood the shock;
 I might as well hae tried a quarry
 O' hard whin⁷ rock.

"Ev'n them he canna get attended,⁸
 Altho' their face he ne'er had kenn'd it,
 Just —— in a kail-blade and send it,
 As soon 's he smells 't,
 Baith their disease, and what will mend it,
 At once he tells 't.

"And then a' doctor's saws an' whittles,⁹
 Of a' dimensions, shapes, an' mettles,
 A' kinds o' boxes, mugs, an' bottles,
 He's sure to hae;
 Their Latin names as fast he rattles
 As A B C.

"Calces o' fossils, earth, and trees;
 True sal-marinum o' the seas;
 The farina of beans and pease,
 He has 't in plenty;

¹ Yesternight.—² No matter!—³ A slight tremulous stroke.—⁴ An oath of negation.—⁵ The stem of Colewort.—⁶ Tumbled.—⁷ The hard stone found in the Scottish hills; granite.

⁸ Those patients who cannot attend upon the doctor, or cannot be seen by him, must send their water in a vial, from the sight of which he pretends to know and cure their various diseases.

⁹ Knives.

Aqua-fontis, what you please,
He can content ye.

“Forbye¹ some new uncommon weapons,
Urinus spiritus of capons:
Or mite-horn shavings, filings, scrapings,
Distill’d *per se*;
Sal-alkali o’ midge-tail clippings,
And monie mae.”²

“Waes me for Johnny Ged’s Hole³ now,”
Quo’ I, “if that the news be true!
His braw calf-ward,⁴ where gowans grew⁵
Sae white and bonnie,
Nae doubt they’ll rive it wi’ the pleugh;
They’ll ruin Johnny!”

The creature grain’d an eldritch laugh,⁶
And says, “Ye need na yoke the pleugh,
Kirk-yards will soon be till’d enough.
Tak ye nae fear:
They’ll a’ be trench’d wi’ monie a sheugh,⁷
In twa-three year.

“Whare I kill’d ane a fair strae death,⁸
By loss o’ blood or want o’ breath,
This night I’m free to tak my aith,
That Hornbook’s skill
Has clad a score i’ their last claith,⁹
By drap an’ pill.

“An honest wabster¹⁰ to his trade,
Whase wife’s twa nieves¹¹ were scarce weel bred,
Gat tippence-worth to mend her head,
When it was sair;
The wife slade cannie¹² to her bed,
But ne’er spak mair.

“A countra laird had taen the batts,¹³
Or some curmurring¹⁴ in his guts;

¹ Besides.—² More.—³ A name given to the grave-digger.—⁴ An inclosure for calves; the term is here used in allusion to the church-yard.—⁵ Daisies.—⁶ Groaned a frightful laugh.—⁷ Ditch, or trench; *i. e.* will be filled with graves.—⁸ To die in bed, in a natural way.—⁹ Shroud.—¹⁰ A weaver.—¹¹ Fists.—¹² Slide gently, or dexterously.—¹³ Botts.—¹⁴ Murmuring, a slight rumbling noise.

His only son for Hornbook sets,
 An' pays him well:
 The lad, for twa guid gimmer pets,¹
 Was laird himsel.

"A bonnie lass, ye kenn'd her name,
 Some ill-brewn drink had hove'd her wame,²
 She trusts hersel, to hide the shame,
 In Hornbook's care;
 Horn sent her aff to her lang hame,
 To hide it there.

"That 's just a swatch³ o' Hornbook's way;
 Thus goes he on from day to day,
 Thus does he poison, kill, an' slay,
 An' s weel paid for 't;
 Yet stops me o' my lawfu' prey,
 Wi' his d-mn'd dirt:⁴

"But, hark! I'll tell you of a plot,
 Tho' dinna ye be speaking o' t;
 I'll nail the self-conceited sot,
 As dead 's a herrin';
 Niest⁵ time we meet, I'll wad a groat,
 He gets his fairin'!"

But just as he began to tell,
 The auld kirk-hammer strak the bell
 Some wee short hour ayont the *twal*,⁶
 Which raised us baith:
 I took the way that pleased mysel,
 And sae did Death.⁷

¹ Ewe lambs.—² Swelled her belly.—³ A sample.—⁴ By sending his patients to the church-yard.—⁵ Next.—⁶ The hour of one.

⁷ So irresistible was the tide of ridicule, on the publication of this poem, that John Wilson, alias Dr. Hornbook, was not only compelled to shut up shop as an apothecary, or druggist rather, but to abandon his school also, as his pupils one by one deserted him.

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.

INSCRIBED TO R. AIKEN, ESQ.

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
 Their homely joys and destiny obscure ;
 Nor grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
 The short and simple annals of the poor.—*Gray.*

MY loved, my honor'd, much respected friend !
 No mercenary bard his homage pays ;
 With honest pride I scorn each selfish end,
 My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise :
 To you I sing in simple Scottish lays,
 The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene ;
 The native feelings strong, the guileless ways ;
 What Aiken in a cottage would have been ;
 Ah ! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there, I ween.

November chill blows loud wi' angry sigh ;¹
 The shortening winter-day is near a close ;
 The miry beasts retreating frae the plough ;
 The blackening trains o' craws to their repose ;
 The toil-worn Cotter frae his labor goes,
 This night his weekly moil is at an end,
 Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
 Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
 And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward
 bend.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
 Beneath the shelter of an aged tree ;
 Th' expectant wee-things,² todlin,³ stacher⁴ thro',
 To meet their dad wi' flichterin⁵ noise and glee.
 His wee bit ingle⁶ blinkin' bonnilie,
 His clean hearth-stane, his thriftie wifie's smile,
 The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
 Does a' his weary, carking cares beguile,
 An' makes him quite forget his labor and his toil.

¹ The continued rushing noise of a strong wind.—² Little children.—

³ Tottering.—⁴ Stagger.—⁵ Fluttering.—⁶ Small fireplace.

Belyve¹ the elder bairns come drappin' in,
 At service out, amang the farmers roun';
 Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie² rin
 A cannie errand to a neebor town;
 Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman grown,
 In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,
 Comes hame, perhaps, to show a braw new gown,
 Or deposite her sair-won penny-fee,
 To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

Wi' joy unfeign'd brothers and sisters meet,
 An' each for other's weelfare kindly spiers:³
 The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnoticed fleet;
 Each tells the uncos⁴ that he sees or hears:
 The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years;
 Anticipation forward points the view.
 The mother, wi' her needle an' her shears,
 Gars⁵ auld claes look amaist⁶ as weel's the new;
 The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

Their masters' and their mistresses' command,
 The youngers a' are warned to obey;
 An' mind their labors wi' an eydent⁷ hand,
 An' ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk⁸ or play;
 An' oh! be sure to fear the Lord alway!
 An' mind your *duty*, duly, morn an' night!
 Lest in temptation's path ye gang⁹ astray,
 Implore his counsel and assisting might:
 They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright!

But hark! a rap comes gently to the door:
 Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
 Tells how a neebor lad cam o'er the moor,
 To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
 The wily mother sees the conscious flame
 Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek;
 Wi' heart-struck anxious care, inquires his name,
 While Jenny hafflins¹⁰ is afraid to speak;
 Weel pleased the mother hears, it's nae wild, worthless
 rake.

¹ By and by.—² Carefully.—³ To inquire.—⁴ Strange sights, tales, or stories.
 —⁵ Makes.—⁶ Almost.—⁷ Diligent.—⁸ Dally, or trifle.—⁹ Go.—¹⁰ Partly.

Wi' kindly welcome Jenny brings him ben ;¹
 A strappan youth ; he tak's the mother's eye ;
 Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill ta'en ;
 The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye ;
 The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
 But blate² and laithfu',³ scarce can weel behave ;
 The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
 What makes the youth sae bashfu' and sae grave ;
 Weelpleased to think her bairn⁴'s respected like the lave.⁵

O happy love ! where love like this is found !
 O heart-felt raptures ! bliss beyond compare !
 I've paced much this weary mortal round,
 And sage experience bids me this declare—
 If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare
 One cordial in this melancholy vale,
 'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,
 In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,
 Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the evening gale.

Is there in human form that bears a heart—
 A wretch ! a villain ! lost to love and truth !
 That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
 Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth ?
 Curse on his perjured arts ! dissembling smooth !
 Are honor, virtue, conscience, all exiled ?
 Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,⁶
 Points to the parents fondling o'er their child ?
 Then paints the ruin'd maid, and their distraction wild !

But now the supper crowns their simple board !
 The halesome parritch,⁷ chief o' Sootia's food :
 The soup their only hawkie⁸ does afford,
 That 'yont⁹ the hallan¹⁰ snugly chows her cud :
 The dame brings forth, in complimentary mood,
 To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck¹¹ fell,¹²
 An' aft he's press'd, an' aft he ca's it good ;
 The frugal wifie, garrulous will tell,
 How 'twas a towmond auld,¹³ sin' lint was i' the bell.¹⁴

¹ In the country parlor.—² Bashful.—³ Sheepish.—⁴ Child.—⁵ The rest, the others.—⁶ Sorrow.—⁷ Wholesome porridge.—⁸ Cow.—⁹ Beyond.—¹⁰ A partition-wall in a cottage, or a seat of turf at the outside.—¹¹ Well-saved or well-kept cheese.—¹² Well-savored, of good relish.—¹³ A twelvemonth old.—¹⁴ Since flax was in the flower.

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
 They, round the ingle,¹ form a circle wide;
 The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
 The big Ha'-Bible,² ance his father's pride:
 His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
 His lyart³ haffets⁴ wearin' thin and bare;
 Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
 He wales⁵ a portion with judicious care;
 And "*Let us worship God!*" he says with solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
 They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim;
 Perhaps Dundee's wild warbling measures rise,
 Or plaintive Martyrs, worthy o' the name:
 Or noble Elgin⁶ beats⁷ the heavenward flame,
 The sweetest far o' Scotia's holy lays:
 Compared with these, Italian trills are tame;
 The tickled ears no heartfelt raptures raise;
 Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
 How Abraham was the friend of God on high;
 Or, Moses bade eternal warfare wage
 With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
 Or, how the royal bard did groaning lie
 Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
 Or, Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
 Or, rapt Isaiah's wild seraphic fire;
 Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
 How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
 How *He*, who bore in heaven the second name,
 Had not on earth whereon to lay his head;
 How his first followers and servants sped;
 The precepts sage they wrote to many a land:
 How *he*, who lone in Patmos banished,
 Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand,
 And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounced by Heaven's
 command.

¹ Fireplace.—² The large hall-Bible.—³ Gray, or of a mixed color.—⁴ Temples, side of the head.—⁵ Chooses, selects.—⁶ Dundee, Martyrs, Elgin, names of sacred melodies used in singing psalms.—⁷ Adds fuel to or increases devotion.

Then kneeling down to heaven's eternal King,
 The *saint*, the *father*, and the *husband* prays:
 Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"¹
 That *thus* they all shall meet in future days;
 There, ever bask in uncreated rays,
 No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
 Together hymning their Creator's praise,
 In such society, yet still more dear,
 While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.

Compared with this, how poor religion's pride,
 In all the pomp of method and of art,
 When men display to congregations wide,
 Devotions every grace except the *heart*!
 The *Power*, incensed, the pageant will desert,
 The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
 But haply, in some cottage far apart,
 May hear, well pleased, the language of the soul;
 And in his *book of life* the inmates poor enrol.

Then homeward all take off their several way;
 The youngling cottagers retire to rest:
 The parent-pair their *secret homage* pay,
 And proffer up to Heaven the warm request,
 That He who stills the raven's clamorous nest,
 And decks the lily fair in flowery pride,
 Would, in the way his wisdom sees the best,
 For them and for their little ones provide;
 But chiefly in their hearts with *grace divine* preside.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
 That makes her loved at home, revered abroad.
 Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
 "An honest man 's the noblest work of God:"²
 And *certainly*, in fair virtue's heavenly road,
 The *cottage* leaves the *palace* far behind:
 What is a lordling's pomp? a cumbrous load,
 Disguising oft the wretch of human-kind,
 Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refined!

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
 For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent!
 Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil,
 Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!

¹ Pope's Windsor Forest.—² Pope's Essay on Man.

And, oh! may Heaven their simple lives prevent
From luxury's contagion weak and vile!
Then, howe'er *crowns* and *coronets* be rent,
A *virtuous populace* may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-loved Isle.

O Thou! who pour'd the patriotic tide
That stream'd thro' Wallace's undaunted heart;
Who dared to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part,
(The patriot's God peculiarly thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
O never, never, Scotia's realm desert:
But still the *patriot* and the *patriot bard*,
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!

The "Cotter's Saturday Night is, perhaps, of all Burns's pieces, the one whose exclusion from the collection, were such things possible now-a-days, would be the most injurious, if not to the genius, at least to the character, of the man. Loftier flights he certainly has made, but in these he remained but a short while on the wing, and effort is too often perceptible; here the motion is easy, gentle, placidly undulating. There is more of the conscious security of power, than in any other of his serious pieces of considerable length; the whole has the appearance of coming in a full stream from the fountain of his heart—a stream that soothes the ear, and has no glare on the surface."—*Lockhart's Life of Burns.*

[The following Poem will, by many readers, be well enough understood ; but for the sake of those who are unacquainted with the manners and traditions of the country where the scene is cast, *Notes* are added, to give some account of the principal charms and spells of that night, so big with prophecy to the peasantry in the west of Scotland. The passion of prying into futurity makes a striking part of the history of human nature in its rude state in all ages and nations ; and it may be some entertainment to a philosophic mind, if any such should honor the Author with a perusal, to see the remains of it among the more unenlightened in our own.]

HALLOWEEN.¹

Yes ! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
The simple pleasures of the lowly train ;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art.—*Goldsmith.*

UPON that night, when fairies light
On Cassilis Downans² dance,
Or owre the lays, in splendid blaze,
On sprightly coursers prance ;
Or for Colean the rout is taen,
Beneath the moon's pale beams ;
There up the Cove,³ to stray an' rove
Among the rocks an' streams,
To sport that night.

Among the bonnie winding banks,
Where Doon rins, wimplin',⁴ clear,
Where Bruce ance ruled the martial ranks
And shook the Carrick⁵ spear,
Some merry, friendly, countra folks,
Together did convene,

¹ Is thought to be a night when witches, devils, and other mischief-making beings, are all abroad on their baneful, midnight errands ; particularly those aerial people, the fairies, are said on that night to hold a grand anniversary.

² Certain little, romantic, rocky, green hills, in the neighborhood of the ancient seat of the earls of Cassilis.

³ A noted cavern near Colean-house, called the Cove of Colean ; which, as well as Cassilis Downans, is famed in country story for being a favorite haunt of fairies.

⁴ Meandering.

⁵ The famous family of that name, the ancestors of Robert, the great deliverer of his country, were earls of Carrick.

To *burn* their nits,¹ an' *pou*² their stocks,
 An' haud their *Halloween*
 Fu' blythe that night.

The lasses feat,³ an' cleanly neat,
 Mair braw than when they're fine;
 Their faces blythe, fu' sweetly kythe,⁴
 Hearts leal,⁵ an' warm, an' kin':⁶
 The lads sae trig,⁷ wi' wooer-babs,⁸
 Weel knotted on their garten,
 Some unco blate,⁹ and some wi' gabs,¹⁰
 Gar lasses' hearts gang startin'
 Whyles fast that night.

Then first and foremost, thro' the kail,
 Their *stocks*¹¹ maun a' be sought ance;
 They steek their een,¹² an' graip, an' wale,¹³
 For muckle anes an' straught anes.¹⁴
 Poor hav'rel¹⁵ Will fell aff the drift,
 An' wander'd thro' the *bow-kail*,¹⁶
 An' pou't,¹⁷ for want o' better shift,
 A *runt*¹⁸ was like a sow-tail,
 Sae bow't¹⁹ that night.

Then straught or crooked, yird²⁰ or nane,
 They roar an' cry a' throu'ther;²¹
 The vera wee-things,²² todlin', rin'²³
 Wi' stocks out-owre their shouther;

¹ Nuts.—² Pull, or pluck.—³ Nice, trim.—⁴ Discover, or show themselves.—
⁵ Loyal, true, faithful.—⁶ Kind.—⁷ Spruce, neat.—⁸ The garter knotted below
 the knee with a couple of loops.—⁹ Very bashful.—¹⁰ To talk boldly.

¹¹ The first ceremony of Halloween is pulling each a *stock* or plant of kail.
 They must go out, hand in hand, with eyes shut, and pull the first they meet
 with. Its being big or little, straight or crooked, is prophetic of the size
 and shape of the grand object of all their spells—the husband or wife. If
 any *yird*, or earth, stick to the root, that is *tocher*, or fortune; and the taste
 of the *custock*, that is, the heart of the stem, is indicative of the natural tem-
 per and disposition. Lastly, the stems, or, to give them their ordinary appella-
 tion, the *runts*, are placed somewhere above the head of the door; and the
 Christian names of the people whom chance brings into the house, are, ac-
 cording to the priority of placing the *runts*, the names in question.

¹² Shut their eyes.—¹³ Grope and choose, or pick.—¹⁴ For large and straight
 ones.—¹⁵ A half-witted, talkative person.—¹⁶ Cabbages.—¹⁷ Pulled.—¹⁸ Stem
 of cabbage, or colewort.—¹⁹ Crooked.—²⁰ With earth, or dirt.—²¹ Pell-mell,
 confusedly.—²² Young children.—²³ Tottering run.

An' gif¹ the *custock*'s² sweet or sour,
 Wi' jocktelegs³ they taste them;
 Syne coziely,⁴ aboon the door,
 Wi' cannie care, they've placed them
 To lie that night.

The lasses staw⁵ frae 'mang them a'
 To pou their *stalks o' corn*;⁶
 But Rab slips out, an' jinks⁷ about,
 Behint the muckle thorn;
 He grippet Nelly hard an' fast;
 Loud skirled⁸ a' the lasses;
 But her *tap-pickle*⁹ maist was lost,
 When kiuttlin¹⁰ i' the fause-house¹¹
 Wi' him that night.

The auld guidwife's¹² weel hoordet¹³ *nits*¹⁴
 Are round an' round divided,
 An' monie lads' an' lasses' fates
 Are there that night decided;
 Some kindle, couthie,¹⁵ side by side,
 An' burn thegither trimly;
 Some start awa' wi' saucy pride,
 An' jump out-owre the chimlie
 Fu' high that night.

Jean slips in twa wi' tentie e'e;¹⁶
 Wha 'twas she wadna¹⁷ tell;

¹ If.—² The stalk of the kail, or colewort.—³ A kind of knife.—⁴ Snugly.
 —⁵ Stole away.

⁶ They go to the barn-yard and pull each, at three several times, a stalk of oats. If the third stalk wants the *top-pickle*, that is, the grain at the top of the stalk, the party in question will come to the marriage-bed any thing but a maid.

⁷ To turn a corner.—⁸ Shrieked.—⁹ Supposed to have allusion to something of which ladies are said to be very careful.—¹⁰ Cuddling.

¹¹ When the corn is in a doubtful state, by being too green, or wet, the stack-builder, by means of old timber, &c., makes a large apartment in his stack, with an opening in the side which is fairest exposed to the wind; this he calls the *fause-house*.

¹² Mistress of the house.—¹³ Hoarded.

¹⁴ Burning the nuts is a famous charm. They name the lad and lass to each particular nut, as they lay them in the fire, and accordingly as they burn quietly together, or start from beside one another, the course and issue of the courtship will be.

¹⁵ Lovingly.—¹⁶ With watchful eye.—¹⁷ Would not.

But this is *Jock*, an' this is *me*,
 She says in to hersel;
 He bleez'd owre her an' she owre him,
 As they wad ne'er mair part!
 Till fuff!¹ he started up the lum,²
 An' Jean had e'en a sair heart
 To see 't that night.

Poor Willie wi' his *bow-kail-runt*,³
 Was *brunt*⁴ wi' primsie⁵ Mallie;
 An' Mallie, nae doubt took the drunt,⁶
 To be compared to Willie;
 Mall's nit lap⁷ out wi' pridefu' fling,
 An' her ain fit⁸ it brunt it;
 While Willie lap an' swoor by *jing*,
 'Twas just the way he wanted
 To be that night.

Nell had the fause-house⁹ in her min'
 She pits¹⁰ hersel an' Rob in;
 In loving bleeze they sweetly join,
 Till white in ase¹¹ they're sobbin';
 Nell's heart was dancin' at the view,
 She whisper'd Rob to look for 't;
 Rob, stowlins,¹² pried¹³ her bonnie mou,¹⁴
 Fu' cozie¹⁵ in the neuk¹⁶ for 't,
 Unseen that night.

But Merran sat behint their backs,
 Her thoughts on Andrew Bell;
 She lea'es them gashin'¹⁷ at their cracks,
 And slips out by hersel:
 She thro' the yard the nearest taks,
 An' to the kiln she goes then,
 An' darklins grapit¹⁸ for the bauks,¹⁹
 And in the *blue-clue*²⁰ throws then,
 Right fear't that night.

¹ With a puff, or bounce.—² The chimney.—³ Cabbage-stalk.—⁴ Burnt.—
⁵ Demure.—⁶ Pet, crabbed humor.—⁷ Leaped.—⁸ Foot.—⁹ False-house; see
 a foregoing note.—¹⁰ Puts.—¹¹ Ashes.—¹² By stealth.—¹³ Tasted, or kissed.—
¹⁴ Mouth, or lips.—¹⁵ Snugly.—¹⁶ Nook.—¹⁷ Talking.—¹⁸ Groped in the
 dark.—¹⁹ Cross-beams.

²⁰ Whoever would, with success, try this spell, must strictly observe these
 directions: Steal out, all alone, to the *kiln*, and darkling, throw into the *pot*

An' ay she win't,¹ an' ay she swat,²
 I wat she made nae jaukin',³
 Till something held within the pat,⁴
 Guid L—d! but she was quakin'!
 But whethèr 'twas the Deil himsel,
 Or whether 'twas a bauk-en',⁵
 Or whether it was Andrew Bell,
 She did na wait on talkin'
 To spier⁶ that night.

Wee Jenny to her graunie says,
 "Will ye go wi' me, graunie?
 I'll *eat the apple' at the glass*,
 I gat frae uncle Johnnie."
 She fuff't⁸ her pipe wi' sic a lunt,
 In wrath she was sae vap'rin',
 She noticed na¹⁰ an aizle¹¹ brunt
 Her braw new worset¹² apron
 Out thro' that night.

"Ye little skelpie limmer's¹³ face!
 How daur you try sic sportin',
 As seek the foul Thief ony place,
 For him to spae¹⁴ your fortune?
 Nae doubt but ye may get a *sight*!
 Great cause ye ha'e to fear it;
 For monie a ane has gotten a fright,
 An' lived an' died deleeret¹⁵
 On sic a night.

"Ae hairst afore¹⁶ the Sherra-moor,¹⁷
 I mind 't as weel 's yestreen,¹⁸

a clue of blue yarn; wind it in a new clue off the old one; and, towards the latter end, something will hold the thread; demand, *Wha hauds? i. e.* Who holds? An answer will be returned from the kiln pot, by naming the Christian and surname of your future spouse.

¹ Wound, did wind.—² Did sweat.—³ Dallying, trifling.—⁴ Pet.—⁵ The end of a beam.—⁶ To inquire.

⁷ Take a candle, and go alone to a looking-glass; eat an apple before it, and some traditions say, you should comb your hair all the time; the face of your conjugal companion *to be* will be seen in the glass, as if peeping over your shoulder.

⁸ Puffed out the smoke.—⁹ A column of smoke.—¹⁰ Not.—¹¹ A hot cinder.—

¹² Worsted.—¹³ A technical term in female scolding.—¹⁴ To divine, or prophesy.—¹⁵ Delirious.—¹⁶ One harvest before.—¹⁷ The battle of Sheriff Moor, in the year 1715.—¹⁸ I remember it as well as if it had been but yesterday.

I was a gilpey¹ then, I'm sure
 I was na past fyfteen:
 The simmer had been cauld an' wat,
 An' stuff was unco green;
 An' ay a rantin' kirk² we gat,
 An' just on *Halloween*.
 It fell that night.

"Our stibble-rig³ was Rab M'Graen,
 A clever, sturdy fallow;
 He's sin⁴ gat Eppie Sim wi' wean,
 That lived in Achmacalla;
 He gat *hemp-seed*,⁵ I mind it weel,
 An' he made unco light o't;
 But monie a day was *by himsel*,⁶
 He was sae sairly frightet
 That very night."

Then up gat fechtin' Jamie Fleck,
 An' he swoor by his conscience,
 That he could *saw*⁷ *hemp-seed* a peck;
 For it was a' but nonsense:
 The auld guidman raught⁸ down the pock,¹⁰
 An' out a handfu' gied him;
 Syne¹¹ bade him slip frae 'mang the folk,
 Some time when nae ane see'd him,
 An' try 't that night.

He marches thro' amang the stacks,
 Tho' he was something sturtin';¹²
 The *graip*¹³ he for a *harrow* taks,
 An' haurls at his curpin:¹⁴

¹ A half-grown girl.—² Harvest-supper.—³ The reaper in harvest who takes the lead.—⁴ Son.

⁵ Steal out, unperceived, and sow a handful of hemp-seed; harrowing it with any thing you can conveniently draw after you. Repeat now and then, "Hempseed, I saw thee; hempseed, I saw thee; and him (or her) that is to be my true-love, come after me and pou thee." Look over your left shoulder, and you will see the appearance of the person invoked, in the attitude of pulling hemp. Some traditions say, "Come after me, and shaw thee;" that is, show thyself: in which case, it simply appears. Others omit the harrowing, and say, "Come after me, and harrow thee."

⁶ Out of his senses.—⁷ Fighting.—⁸ Sow.—⁹ Reached.—¹⁰ Bag, or sack.—¹¹ Then.—¹² Frighted.—¹³ A three-pronged dung-fork.—¹⁴ Crupper.

An' every now an' then, he says,
 "Hemp-seed I saw thee,
 An' her that is to be my lass,
 Come after me, and draw thee
 As fast this night."

He whistled up Lord Lennox march,
 To keep his courage cheery:
 Altho' his hair began to arch,
 He was sae fley'd¹ an' eerie;²
 Till presently he hears a squeak,
 An' then a grane³ an' gruntle;⁴
 He by his shouther gae a keek,⁵
 An' tumbled wi' a wintle⁶
 Out-owre that night.

He roar'd a horrid murder-shout,
 In dreadfu' desperation!
 An' young an' auld cam rinnin' out,
 An' hear the sad narration:
 He swoor 'twas hilchin' Jean M'Craw,
 Or crouchie⁸ Merran Humphie,
 'Till stop! she trotted thro' them a';
 An' wha was it but *grumphie*⁹
 Asteer¹⁰ that night!

Meg fain wad to the *barn* hae gaen
 To win¹¹ three wechts¹² o' naething;¹³
 But for to meet the Deil her lane,¹⁴
 She pat but little faith in:
 She gies the herd a pickle¹⁵ nits,¹⁶
 An' twa red cheekit apples,

¹ Scared, frightened. — ² Afraid of spirits. — ³ Groan. — ⁴ Grunting noise. —

⁵ To peep. — ⁶ A stagger. — ⁷ Halting. — ⁸ Crooked-backed. — ⁹ A sow. —

¹⁰ Abroad. — ¹¹ To winnow as corn. — ¹² An instrument for winnowing corn.

¹³ This charm must likewise be performed unperceived, and alone. You go to the *barn*, and open both doors, taking them off the hinges if possible; for there is danger that the *being*, about to appear, may shut the doors, and do you some mischief. Then take that instrument used in winnowing the corn, which, in our country dialect we call a *wecht*; and go through all the attitudes of letting down corn against the wind. Repeat it three times; and the third time an apparition will pass through the barn, in at the windy door, and out at the other, having both the figure in question, and the appearance or retinue, marking the employment or station in life.

¹⁴ Herself alone. — ¹⁵ A few. — ¹⁶ Nuts.

To watch, while for the barn she sets,¹
 In hopes to see Tam Kipples
 That vera night.

She turns the key wi' cannie thraw,
 And owre the threshold ventures;
 But first on Sawnie gies a ca',
 Syne² bauldly in she enters;
 A *ratton*³ rattled up the wa',
 An' she cried, L—d preserve her!
 An' ran thro' midden-hole⁴ an' a',
 An' pray'd wi' zeal an' fervor,
 Fu' fast that night.

They hoy't⁵ out Will, wi' sair advice:
 They hecht⁶ him some fine braw ane;⁷
 It chanced the *stack* he *faddom'd*⁸ *thrice*,⁹
 Was timmer-propt for thrawin'.¹⁰
 He taks a swirlie,¹¹ auld moss oak,
 For some black, grousome carlin;¹²
 An' loot a winze,¹³ an' drew a stroke,
 Till skin in blypes¹⁴ came haurlin'¹⁵
 Aff's nieves¹⁶ that night.

A wanton widow Leezie was,
 As canty as a kittlen;¹⁷
 But, och! that night, amang the shaws,
 She got a fearfu' settlin'!
 She thro' the whins,¹⁸ an' by the cairn,¹⁹
 An' owre the hill gaed scrievin',²⁰
 Whare *three lairds' lands meet at a burn*,²¹
 To dip her left sark-sleeve in,
 Was bent that night.

¹ Sets off.—² Then.—³ A rat.—⁴ A dung-hole.—⁵ Urged.—⁶ Promised to foretell something that is to be got or given.—⁷ A fine handsome sweetheart.—⁸ Fathomed.

⁹ Take an opportunity of going, unnoticed, to a *bean-stack*, and fathom it three times round. The last fathom of the last time, you will catch in your arms the appearance of your future conjugal yoke-fellow.

¹⁰ Twisting, or inclining to fall, therefore propt with timber.—¹¹ Knotty.—¹² Grim-looking, ugly old woman.—¹³ Swore an oath.—¹⁴ Shreds.—¹⁵ Peeling.—¹⁶ Off his knuckles.—¹⁷ Frisky as a kitten.—¹⁸ Furze, or gorse.—¹⁹ A heap of stones.—²⁰ Swiftly.

²¹ You go out, one or more, for this is a social spell, to a south-running spring or rivulet, where three lairds' lands meet, and dip your left shirt-sleeve.

Whyles¹ owre a linn² the burnie plays,
 As thro' the glen it wimpl't;³
 Whyles round a rocky scaur it strays;
 Whyles in a wiel⁴ it dimpl't;
 Whyles glitter'd to the nightly rays,
 Wi' bickering, dancing dazzle;
 Whyles cookit⁵ underneath the braes,
 Below the spreading hazel,
 Unseen that night.

Amang the brachens,⁷ on the brae
 Between her an' the moon,
 The Deil, or else an outler quey,⁶
 Gat up an' gae a croon:²
 Poor Leezie's heart maist lap the hool;¹⁰
 Near lav'rock¹¹ height she jumpit,
 But mist a fit,¹² an' in the *pool*
 Out-owre the lugs she plumpit,¹³
 Wi' a plunge that night.

In order, on the clean hearth-stane,
 The *luggies* three¹⁴ are ranged,
 And every time great care is ta'en
 To see them duly changed:
 Auld uncle John, wha wedlock's joys
 Sin' *Mar's-year*¹⁵ did desire,
 Because he got the toomdish¹⁶ thrice,
 He heaved them on the fire
 In wrath that night.

Go to bed in sight of a fire, and hang your wet sleeve before it to dry. Lie awake; and some time near midnight, an apparition, having the exact figure of the grand object in question, will come and turn the sleeve, as if to dry the other side of it.

¹ Sometimes.—² A waterfall.—³ Waved.—⁴ Whirlpool.—⁵ Appeared and disappeared by fits.—⁶ Declivity or precipice.—⁷ Fern.—⁸ A young cow running at large, not housed.—⁹ To roar, or bellow.—¹⁰ Leaped out of her skin.—¹¹ Lark.—¹² Missed a foot.—¹³ Over head and ears.

¹⁴ Take three dishes: put clean water in one, foul water in another, leave the third empty: blindfold a person, and lead him to the hearth where the dishes are ranged: he (or she) dips the left hand: if by chance in the clean water, the future husband or wife will come to the bar of matrimony a maid: if in the foul, a widow: if in the empty dish, it foretells with equal certainty no marriage at all. It is repeated three times; and every time the arrangement of the dishes is altered.

¹⁵ The year 1715.—¹⁶ Empty dish.

Wi' meriy sangs, an' friendly cracks,¹
 I wat they did na weary;
 An' unco² tales, an' funny jokes, •
 Their sports were cheap an' cheery,
 'Till *butter'd so'ns*³ wi' fragrant lunt,⁴
 Set a' their gabs⁵ a-steerin';⁶
 Syne⁷ wi' a social glass o' strunt,⁸
 They parted aff careerin'
 Fu' blythe that night.

SCOTCH DRINK.

Gie him strong drink until he wink,
 That's sinking in despair;
 An' liquor guid to fire his bluid,
 That's prest wi' grief an' care;
 There let him bouse an' deep carouse,
 Wi' bumpers flowing o'er,
 Till he forgets his *loves* or *debts*,
 An' minds his griefs no more.
Solomon's Proverbs, xxxi. 6, 7.

LET other poets raise a fracas
 'Bout vines, an' wines, an' drunken Bacchus,
 An' crabbit names an' stories wrack us,
 An' grate our lug,
 I sing the juice *Scots bear* can mak us,
 In glass or jug.

O thou, my Muse! guid auld *Scotch drink*,
 Whether thro' wimplin' worms thou jink,
 Or, richly brown, ream o'er the brink,
 In glorious faem,
 Inspire me, till I lisp and wink,
 To sing thy name!

Let husky Wheat the haughs adorn;
 An' Aits set up their awnie horn,
 An' Peas an' Beans, at e'en or morn,
 Perfume the plain,
 Leeze me on thee, *John Barleycorn*,
 Thou king o' grain!

¹ To converse.—² Strange, marvellous.

³ Sowens—oatmeal made into a kind of pudding. This is always the *Halloween supper*.

⁴ Smoke of tobacco—⁵ Mouths.—⁶ Stirring.—⁷ Then.—⁸ Spirituous liquor.

On thee aft Scotland chows her cood,
 In souple scones,¹ the wale² o' food!
 Or tumblin' in the boiling flood,
 Wi' kail an' beef;
 But when thou pours thy strong heart's blood,
 There thou shines chief.

Food fills the wame,³ an' keeps us livin';
 Tho' life's a gift no worth receivin',
 When heavy dragg'd wi' pine an' grievin';⁴
 But, oil'd by thee,
 The wheels o' life gae down hill, scrievin';⁵
 Wi' rattlin' glee.

Thou clears the head o' doited⁶ Lear;⁷
 Thou cheers the heart o' drooping Care;
 Thou strings the nerves o' Labor sair,
 At's weary toil;
 Thou even brightens dark Despair
 Wi' gloomy smile.

Aft clad in massy siller weed,⁸
 Wi' gentles thou erects thy head;
 Yet humbly kind in time o' need,
 The poor man's wine,⁹
 His wee drap parritch, or his bread,
 Thou kitchens¹⁰ fine.

Thou art the life o' public haunts;
 But¹¹ thee, what were our fairs and rants?
 Even godly meetings o' the saunts,
 By thee inspired,
 When gaping they besiege the tents,
 Are doubly fired.

That merry night we get the corn in,
 O sweetly then thou reams¹² the horn in!

¹ Flexible bread; i. e. Bannocks made of barley meal, &c., which when baked are so flexible as to admit of being easily rolled together.

² The choice.—³ The belly.—⁴ Grieving.—⁵ Swiftly.—⁶ Stupefied, fatigued with study.—⁷ Learning, knowledge.

⁸ Silver dress; alluding to the silver cups and tankards used at the tables of the gentry.

⁹ Ale is here intended, a small portion of which is frequently mixed with the porridge of the poorer sort of people.

¹⁰ Gives a relish to.—¹¹ Without.—¹² Foams.

Or reeking on a New-year mornin'
 In cog or bicker,¹
 An' just a wee drap sp'ritual burn in,²
 An' gusty³ sucker!⁴

When Vulcan gies his bellows breath,
 An' ploughmen gather wi' their graith,⁵
 O rare! to see thee fizz⁶ an' freath⁷
 I' th' lugget caup!⁸
 Then Burnewin⁹ comes on like death
 At every chaup.¹⁰

Nae mercy then for airn¹¹ or steel;
 The brawnie, bainie,¹² ploughman chiel,
 Brings hard owrehip, wi' sturdy wheel,
 The strong fore-hammer,¹³
 Till block an' studie¹⁴ ring an' reel
 Wi' dinsome clamor.

When skirlin' weanies¹⁵ see the light,
 Thou maks the gossips clatter¹⁶ bright,
 How fumblin' cuifs¹⁷ their dearies slight;
 Wae worth the name;
 Nae howdie¹⁸ gets a social night,
 Or plack frae them.

When neebors anger at a plea,
 An' just as wud¹⁹ as wud can be,
 How easy can the *barley bree*²⁰
 Cement the quarrel!
 It's aye the cheapest lawyer's fee,
 To taste the barrel.

Alake! that e'er my Muse has reason
 To wyte²¹ her countrymen wi' treason!
 But monie daily weet their weason²²
 Wi' liquors nice,
 An' hardly, in a winter's season
 E'er spier²³ her price.

¹ A wooden cup or dish.—² A small quantity of spirits burnt in a spoon, and put into the ale.—³ Tasteful.—⁴ Sugar.—⁵ Tackle, geer.—⁶ To make a hissing noise.—⁷ Froth.—⁸ A cup with a handle.—⁹ Burn-the-wind; the blacksmith.—¹⁰ Stroke.—¹¹ Iron.—¹² Bony.—¹³ The smith's large hammer.—¹⁴ Anvil.—¹⁵ Crying children.—¹⁶ Tell idle stories.—¹⁷ Ninnies.—¹⁸ A midwife.—¹⁹ Mad.—²⁰ Juice.—²¹ To blame.—²² Weasand.—²³ To ask, to inquire.

Wae worth that *brandy*, burning trash!
 Fell source o' monie a pain an' brash!¹
 Twins² monie a poor, doylt,³ drunken hash,⁴
 O' half his days;
 An' sends, beside, auld Scotland's cash
 To her warst faes.

Ye Scots wha wish auld Scotland well,
 Ye chief, to you my tale I tell,
 Poor plackless⁵ devils like mysel!
 It sets you ill,
 Wi' bitter dearthfu' wines to mell,⁶
 Or foreign gill.

May gravels round his blether wrench,
 An' gouts torment him inch by inch,
 Wha twists his gruntle' wi' a glunch⁷
 O' sour disdain,
 Out-owre a glass o' *whisky punch*
 Wi' honest men.

O *Whisky!* soul o' plays an' pranks!
 Accept a Bardie's humble thanks!
 When wanting thee, what tuneless cranks
 Are my poor verses!
 Thou comes!—they rattle i' their ranks
 At ither's a—s!

Thee, *Ferintosh!*⁸ O sadly lost!
 Scotland, lament frae coast to coast!
 Now colic grips, an' barkin' hoast,⁹
 May kill us a';
 For loyal Forbes's charter'd boast¹¹
 Is ta'en awa!

Thae curst horse-leeches o' th' excise,
 Wha mak the *whisky stells* their prize!

¹ Sudden illness.—² Parts, deprives.—³ Stupid.—⁴ A fellow who knows neither how to act or dress with propriety.—⁵ Pennyless.—⁶ To meddle.—⁷ The phiz.—⁸ A frown; sour look.—⁹ A very superior kind of whisky made in a district of the Highlands called by that name.—¹⁰ Coughing.

¹¹ Lord Forbes, of Ferintosh, in the county of Cromarty, formerly held by charter a right for all his tenantry to distil whisky without paying any duty to the king.

Haud up thy hand, Deil! ance, twice, thrice!
 There, seize the blinkers!¹
 An' bake them up in brunstane² pies
 For poor d—n'd drinkers.

Fortune! if thou'll but gie me still
 Hale breeks,³ a scone,⁴ an' *whisky gill*,
 An' rowth⁵ o' rhyme to rave at will,
 Tak a' the rest,
 An' deal 't about as thy blind skill
 Directs thee best.

THE AUTHOR'S EARNEST CRY AND PRAYER⁶

TO THE SCOTCH REPRESENTATIVES IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Dearest of distillation! last and best—
 —How art thou lost!—

Parody on Milton.

YE Irish Lords, ye Knights an' Squires,
 Wha *represent* our brughs an' shires,
 An' doucely manage our affairs
 In parliament,
 To you a simple Poet's prayers
 Are humbly sent.

Alas! my roupet⁷ Muse is hearse!⁸
 Your Honors' heart wi' grief twad pierce!
 To see her sitting on her a—e
 Low i' the dust,
 An' sciechin' out prosaic verse,
 An' like to brust!

Tell them wha hae the chief direction,
 Scotland an' me's in great affliction,
 E'er sin' they laid that curst restriction
 On *Aquavita*;
 An' rouse them up to strong conviction,
 An' move their pity.

¹ A term of contempt.—² Brimstone.—³ Whole breeches.—⁴ A cake; kind of bread.—⁵ Plenty.

⁶ This was written before the act anent the Scotch distilleries, of Session 1786; for which Scotland and the Author return their most grateful thanks.

⁷ Hoarse, as with a cold.—⁸ Hoarse.

Stand forth, an' tell yon Premier youth,
 The honest, open, naked truth :
 Tell him o' mine an' Scotland's drouth,
 His servants humble :
 The muckle¹ Devil blaw ye south,
 If ye dissemble !

Does onie great man glunch² an' gloom ?
 Speak out, an' never fash your thumb !³
 Let posts an' pensions sink or soom⁴
 Wi' them wha grant 'em :
 If honestly they canna come,
 Far better want 'em.

In gathering votes you were na slack ;
 Now stand as tightly by your tack ;
 Ne'er claw your lug,⁵ an' fidge your back,
 An' hum an' haw ;
 But raise your arm, an' tell your crack
 Before them a'.

Paint Scotland greetin'⁶ owre her thrissle,⁷
 Her mutchkin stoup⁸ as toom 's a whistle ;⁹
 An' d-mn'd Excisemen in a bussle,
 Seizin' a stell,¹⁰
 Triumphant crushin' 't like a mussel
 Or lampit¹¹ shell.

Then on the tither hand present her,
 A blackguard Smuggler right behint her,
 An' cheek-for-chow a chuffie¹² Vintner,
 Colleaguin join,
 Picking her pouch¹³ as bare as winter
 Of a' kind coin.

Is there that bears the name o' Scot,
 But feels his heart's bluid rising hot,
 To see his poor auld mither's pot
 Thus dung in staves,¹⁴
 An' plunder'd o' her hindmost groat
 By gallows knaves ?

¹ Great.—² Frown.—³ Don't be afraid, never trouble your head about it.
 —⁴ Swim.—⁵ Ear.—⁶ Weeping.—⁷ Thistle, the national emblem.—⁸ Pint
 mug.—⁹ Empty.—¹⁰ A still, used for making whisky.—¹¹ Lympet, a shell-
 fish.—¹² Fat-faced.—¹³ Pocket.—¹⁴ Knocked to pieces.

Alas! I'm but a nameless wight,
 Trode i' the mire an' out o' sight!
 But could I like Montgomeries fight,
 Or gab¹ like Boswell,
 There's some sark-necks² I wad draw tight,
 An' tie some hose well.

God bless your honors, can ye see 't,
 The kind, auld, cantie carlin³ greet,⁴
 An' no⁵ get warmly to your feet,
 An' gar⁶ them hear it,
 An' tell them wi' a patriot heat,
 Ye winna' bear it!

Some o' you nicely ken the laws,
 To round the period, an' pause,
 An' wi' rhetoric clause on clause
 To mak harangues;
 Then echo thro' Saint Stephen's wa's
 Auld Scotland's wrangs.

Dempster,⁸ a true-blue Scot I'se warran;
 Thee, aith⁹-detesting, chaste Kilkerran;¹⁰
 An' that glib-gabbet¹¹ Highland baron,
 The laird o' Graham;¹²
 An' ane, a chap that's d-mn'd auldfarran,¹³
 Dundas his name.

Erskine, a spunkie Norland billie;
 True Campbells, Frederick, an' Ilay;
 An' Livingstone, the bauld Sir Willie;
 An' monie ithers,
 Whom auld Demosthenes or Tully
 Might own for brithers.

Thee, sodger Hugh,¹⁴ my watchman stented,
 If bardies e'er are represented;

¹ To speak boldly.—² Shirt-collars.—³ Old lady.—⁴ Weep.—⁵ Not.—⁶ Make.
 —⁷ Will not.

⁸ George Dempster, Esq., of Dunnichen, Forfarshire. He was many years M. P. for the Dundee district of boroughs, and always spoke and voted on the liberal side of politics.

⁹ An oath.—¹⁰ Sir Adam Ferguson.—¹¹ That speaks smoothly and readily.
 —¹² The Duke of Montrose.—¹³ Sagacious, cunning.—¹⁴ Earl of Eglintoun, then Colonel Montgomery, and representative for Ayrshire.

I ken if that your sword were wanted,
 Ye'd lend your hand,
 But when there's aught to say anent it,
 Ye're at a stand.

Arouse, my boys! exert your mettle,
 To get auld Scotland back her *kettle*;¹
 Or, faith! I'll wad² my new pleugh-pettle,³
 Ye'll see 't or lang,⁴
 She'll teach you wi' a reekin' whittle,⁵
 Anither sang.

This while she's been in crankous⁶ mood,
 Her *lost Militia*⁷ fired her bluid;
 (Deil na they never mair do guid,
 Play'd her that pliskie!⁸)
 An' now she's like to rin red-wud,⁹
 About her whisky.

An' L—d! if ance they pit her till 't,¹⁰
 Her tartan petticoat she'll kilt,¹¹
 An' dirk an' pistol at her belt,
 She'll tak the streets,
 An' rin her whittle to the hilt,
 I' the first she meets.

For G—d's sake, Sirs! then speak her fair,
 An' straik her cannie¹² wi' the hair,
 An' to the muckle House¹³ repair,
 Wi' instant speed,
 An' strive, wi' a' your wit an' lear,¹⁴
 To get remead.¹⁵

Yon ill-tongued tinkler, Charlie Fox,
 May taunt you wi' his jeers an' mocks;
 But gie him 't het,¹⁶ my hearty cocks!
 E'en cove the caddie;¹⁷
 An' send him to his dicing box
 An' sporting lady.

¹ Her still.—² To bet or wager.—³ Plough-staff.—⁴ Ere long.—⁵ A bloody sword.—⁶ Fretful.

⁷ Burlesque allusion to the bill for a Scotch militia, which was, shortly before that time, negatived in Parliament.

⁸ A trick.—⁹ Run stark mad.—¹⁰ Put her to it.—¹¹ To truss up the clothes.—¹² Stroke her gently.—¹³ The parliament house.—¹⁴ Learning.—¹⁵ Remedy.—¹⁶ Hot.—¹⁷ Frighten the fellow, make him knock under.

Tell yon guid bluid¹ o' auld Boconnock's,
 I'll be his debt twa mashlum bonnocks,²
 An' drink his health in auld Nanse Tinnock's,³
 Nine times a week,
 If he some scheme, like tea an' winnocks,⁴
 Wad kindly seek.

Could he some *commutation* broach,
 I'll pledge my aith in guid braid Scotch,
 He need na fear their foul reproach
 Nor erudition,
 Yon mixtie-maxtie⁵ queer hotch-potch,
 The *Coalition*.

Auld Scotland has a raucle⁶ tongue;
 She's just a devil wi' a rung;⁷
 An' if she promise auld or young
 To tak their part,
 Though by the neck she should be strung,
 She'll no desert.

An' now, ye chosen *Five-and-Forty*,⁸
 May still your mither's heart support ye;
 Then, though a minister grow dorty,⁹
 An' kick your place,
 Ye'll snap your fingers, poor an' hearty,
 Before his face.

God bless your honors a' your days
 Wi' sowps o' kail¹⁰ an' brats o' claise,¹¹
 In spite o' a' the thievish kaes¹²
 That haunt Saint Jamie's!
 Your humble poet sings an' prays
 While Rab his name is.

POSTSCRIPT.

Let half-starved slaves, in warmer skies,
 See future wines, rich-clustering, rise—

¹ Good blood.—² Two bannocks or cakes made of mixed corn.

³ A worthy old hostess of the Author's in Mauchline, where he sometimes studied politics over a glass of guld auld Scotch drink.

⁴ Tea and windows; an allusion to Mr. Pitt's commutation tax.

⁵ Confusedly mixed.—⁶ Rash, fearless.—⁷ A cudgel.—⁸ The Scotch members of parliament.—⁹ Saucy.—¹⁰ Sups of kail-broth.—¹¹ Rags of clothes.—¹² Jack-daws.

Their lot auld Scotland ne'er envies,
 But blythe and frisky,
 She eyes her free-born, martial boys
 Tak aff their whisky.

What tho' their Phœbus kinder warms,
 While fragrance blooms and beauty charms!
 When wretches range, in famish'd swarms,
 The scented groves,
 Or hounded forth, dishonor arms
 In hungry droves:

Their gun's a burden on their shoulder;
 They downa¹ bide the stink o' pouter;
 Their bauldest thought's a hank'ring swither²
 To stan' or rin,
 Till skelp—a shot!—they're aff a' throwther,³
 To save their skin.

But bring a Scotsman frae his hill,
 Clap in his cheek a Highland gill,⁴
 Say, such is royal George's will,
 An' there's the foe,
 He has nae thought but how to kill
 Twa at a blow.

Nae cauld, faint-hearted doubtings tease him;
 Death comes, wi' fearless eye he sees him;
 Wi' bluidy hand a welcome gies him:
 An' when he fa's,
 His latest draught o' breathin' lea'es⁵ him
 In faint huzzas.

Sages their solemn een may steek,⁶
 An' raise a philosophic reek,⁷
 An' physically causes seek,
 In clime an' season;
 But tell me *whisky's* name in Greek,
 I'll tell the reason.

Scotland, my auld respected Mither!
 Tho' whyles⁸ ye moistify your leather,

¹ Cannot.—² Hesitation.—³ All pell-mell, or in confusion.—⁴ A gill of Highland whisky.—⁵ Leaves.—⁶ Shut.—⁷ Smoke.—⁸ Sometimes.

Till whare ye sit, on craps¹ o' heather,
 Ye tine your dam;²
 (*Freedom and Whisky gang thegither!*)
 Tak aff your dram!³

THE VISION.

DUAN FIRST.⁴

THE sun had closed the winter day,
 The curlers⁵ quat⁶ their roaring play,
 An' hunger'd maukin⁷ ta'en her way
 To kail-yards green,
 While faithless snaws ilk⁸ step betray
 Whar she has been.

The thresher's weary *flingin-tree*⁹
 The lee-lang¹⁰ day had tired me;
 And whan the day had closed his e'e,
 Far i' the west,
 Ben i' the *spence*¹¹ right pensivelie,
 I gaed to rest.

There, lanely, by the ingle-cheek,¹²
 I sat and eyed the spewing reek,¹³
 That fill'd, wi' hoast-provoking smeeke,¹⁴
 The auld clay biggin;¹⁵
 An' heard the restless rattons squeak
 About the riggin'.

All in this mottie,¹⁶ misty clime,
 I backward mused on wasted time,

¹ Crops.—² Lose your urine.

³ Burns was not so much the votary of Bacchus as this and "Scotch Drinks," the preceding poem, would lead the reader to suppose. When "Auld Nanse Tinnock," the Mauchline landlady, found her name celebrated in this poem, she said, "Robin Burns may be a clever enough lad, but he has little regard to truth; for I'm sure the chiel' was never in a' his life aboon three times i' my house."

⁴ Duan, a term of Ossian's for the different divisions of a digressive poem. See his Cath-Loda.

⁵ A game on the ice.—⁶ Did quit.—⁷ A hare.—⁸ Each.—⁹ A flail.—¹⁰ Live-long.—¹¹ In the country parlor.—¹² Fireside.—¹³ Smoke.—¹⁴ Cough-provoking smoke.—¹⁵ Building.—¹⁶ Full of motes.

How I had spent my youthfu' prime,
 An' done nae-thing,
 But stringin' blethers' up in rhyme,
 For fools to sing.

Had I to guid advice but harkit,²
 I might, by this, hae led a market,
 Or strutted in a bank and clarkit³
 My cash-account:
 While here, half-mad, half-fed, half-sarkit,⁴
 Is a' th' amount.

I started, muttering, blockhead! coof!⁵
 And heaved on high my waukit loof,⁶
 To swear by a' yon starry roof,
 Or some rash aith,⁷
 That I, henceforth, would be *rhyme proof*
 Till my last breath—

When click! the string the snick⁸ did draw;
 And jee! the door gaed to the wa';
 An' by my ingle lowe⁹ I saw,
 Now bleezin'¹⁰ bright,
 A tight, outlandish *Hizzie*,¹¹ braw,
 Come full in sight.

Ye need na doubt, I held my whisht;¹²
 The infant aith, half-form'd, was crusht;
 I glower'd as eerie's I'd been dush't¹³
 In some wild glen;
 When sweet, like modest Worth, she blusht,
 And stepped ben.¹⁴

Green, slender, leaf-clad *holly-boughs*
 Were twisted, gracefu', round her brows;
 I took her for some *Scottish Muse*,
 By that same token;
 An' come to stop those reckless vows,
 Would soon been broken.

¹ Foolish or romantic ideas.—² Harkened.—³ Wrote.—⁴ Badly provided with shirts.—⁵ Ninny.—⁶ Thick or clumsy hand.—⁷ Oath.—⁸ The latch of a door.—⁹ Flame of the fire.—¹⁰ Blazing.—¹¹ A young girl.—¹² Was silent.

¹³ Stared frightfully, as if I had been suddenly pushed, or attacked by an ox.

¹⁴ Into the parlor.

A "hair-brain'd sentimental trace,"
 Was strongly marked in her face;
 A wildy-witty, rustic grace
 Shone full upon her;
 Her eye, even turn'd on empty space,
 Beam'd keen with Honor.

Down flow'd her robe, a tartan sheen,¹
 Till half a leg was scrimply² seen;
 And such a leg! my bonnie Jean
 Could only peer³ it;
 Sae straught,⁴ sae taper, tight, and clean,
 Nane else came near it.

Her *mantle* large, of greenish hue,
 My gazing wonder chiefly drew;
 Deep *lights* and *shades*, bold-mingling, threw
 A lustre grand;
 And seem'd, to my astonish'd view,
 A *well-known* land.

Here, rivers in the sea were lost;
 There, mountains to the skies were tost;
 Here, tumbling billows mark'd the coast,
 With surging foam;
 There, distant shone Art's lofty boast,
 The lordly dome.

Here, Doon pour'd down his far-fetch'd floods;
 There, well-fed Irwine stately thuds;⁵
 Auld hermit Ayr staw⁶ thro' his woods,
 On to the shore;
 And many a lesser torrent scuds,
 With seeming roar.

Low, in a sandy valley spread,
 An ancient *borough* rear'd her head;
 Still, as in Scottish story read,
 She boasts a race,
 To every nobler virtue bred,
 And polish'd grace.

¹ A bright, or shining tartan, or checkered woollen stuff, much worn in Scotland, particularly in the Highlands.

² Scantily.—³ Equal.—⁴ Straight.—⁵ To make a loud continued noise.—⁶ Stole.

By stately tower or palace fair,
 Or ruins pendent in the air,
 Bold stems of heroes, here and there,
 I could discern;
 Some seem'd to muse, some seem'd to dare,
 With feature stern.

My heart did glowing transport feel,
 To see a race¹ heroic wheel,
 And brandish round the deep-dyed steel
 In sturdy blows;
 While back-recoiling seem'd to reel
 Their Suthron foes.

His *Country's Saviour*,² mark him well;
 Bold Richardton's³ heroic swell;
 The chief on Sark⁴ who glorious fell,
 In high command;
 And He whom ruthless fates expel
 His native land.

There, where a scepter'd Pictish shade⁵
 Stalk'd round his ashes lowly laid,
 I mark'd a martial race, portray'd
 In colors strong;
 Bold, soldier-featured, undismay'd
 They strode along.

Thro' many a wild, romantic grove,⁶
 Near many a hermit-fancied cove,
 (Fit haunts for Friendship or for Love,)
 In musing mood,
 An *aged Judge*, I saw him rove,
 Dispensing good.

¹ The Wallaces.—² William Wallace.

³ Adam Wallace, of Richardton, cousin to the immortal preserver of Scottish Independence.

⁴ Wallace, laird of Craigie, who was second in command, under Douglas, earl of Ormond, at the famous battle on the banks of Sark, fought *anno* 1448. That glorious victory was principally owing to the judicious conduct and intrepid valor of the gallant laird of Craigie, who died of his wounds after the action.

⁵ Coilus, King of the Picts, from whom the district of Kyle is said to take its name, lies buried, as tradition says, near the family seat of the Montgomeries of Coil's-field, where his burial-place is still shown.

⁶ Barksimming, the seat of the late Lord Justice Clerk.

With deep-struck reverential awe¹
 The learned *Sire* and *Son* I saw,
 To Nature's God and Nature's law
 They gave their lore:
 This, all its source and end to draw;
 That, to adore.

Brydone's brave ward² I well could spy,
 Beneath old Scotia's smiling eye;
 Who call'd on Fame, low standing by,
 To hand him on
 Where many a Patriot-name on high,
 And hero shone.

DUAN SECOND.

With musing deep, astonish'd stare,
 I view'd the heavenly-seeming *Fair*,
 A whispering throb did witness bear,
 Of kindred sweet,
 When, with an elder sister's air,
 She did me greet:—

All hail! my own inspired Bard!
 In me thy native Muse regard:
 Nor longer mourn thy fate is hard,
 Thus poorly low!
 I come to give thee such reward
 As we bestow.

Know, the great *Genius* of this land
 Has many a light aerial band,
 Who, all beneath his high command,
 Harmoniously,
 As arts or arms they understand,
 Their labors ply.

They Scotia's race among them share;
 Some fire the Soldier on to dare;
 Some rouse the Patriot up to bare
 Corruption's heart;
 Some teach the Bard, a darling care,
 The tuneful art.

¹ Catrine, the seat of the late Doctor, and present Professor Stewart.

² Colonel Fullarton.

'Mong swelling floods of reeking gore,
 They ardent, kindling spirits pour;
 Or 'mid the venal Senate's roar,
 They, sightless, stand,
 To mend the honest Patriot-lore,
 And grace the hand.

And when the Bard, or hoary Sage,
 Charm or instruct the future age,
 They bind the wild poetic rage
 In energy,
 Or point the inconclusive page
 Full on the eye.

Hence Fullarton, the brave and young;
 Hence Dempster's zeal-inspired tongue;
 Hence sweet harmonious Beattie sung
 His *Minstrel* lays;
 Or tore, with noble ardor stung,
 The *Skeptic's*¹ bays.

To lower orders are assign'd,
 The humbler ranks of human kind,
 The rustic Bard, the laboring Hind,
 The Artisan;
 All choose, as various they're inclined,
 The various man.

When yellow waves the heavy grain,
 The threatening storm some strongly rein;
 Some teach to meliorate the plain
 With tillage skill;
 And some instruct the shepherd train
 Blithe o'er the hill.

Some hint the lover's harmless wile;
 Some grace the maiden's artless smile;
 Some soothe the laborer's weary toil
 For humble gains,
 And make his cottage-scenes beguile
 His cares and pains.

Some, bounded to a district-space,
 Explore at large man's infant race,

¹ David Hume.

To mark the embryotic trace,
 Of *rustic Bard*;
And careful note each opening grace,
 A guide and guard.

Of these am I—Coila¹ my name;
And this district as mine I claim,
Where once the Campbells, chiefs of fame,
 Held ruling power;
I mark'd thy embryo tuneful flame,
 Thy natal hour.

With future hope, I oft would gaze,
Fond, on thy little early ways,
Thy rudely caroll'd, chiming phrase,
 In uncouth rhymes,
Fired at the simple, artless lays
 Of other times.

I saw thee seek the sounding shore,
Delighted with the dashing roar;
Or when the North his fleecy store
 Drove thro' the sky,
I saw grim Nature's visage hoar,
 Struck thy young eye.

Or when the deep green-mantled earth
Warm cherish'd every floweret's birth,
And joy and music pouring forth
 In every grove;
I saw thee eye the general mirth
 With boundless love.

When ripen'd fields and azure skies,
Call'd forth the reapers' rustling noise,
I saw thee leave their evening joys,
 And lonely stalk,
To vent thy bosom's swelling rise
 In pensive walk.

When youthful love, warm-blushing, strong,
Keen-shivering shot thy nerves along,

¹ Colla, from Kyle, a district in Ayrshire, so called, saith tradition, from Coll, or Coilus, a Pictish monarch.

Those accents, grateful to thy tongue,
 Th' adored *name*,
 I taught thee how to pour in song,
 To soothe thy flame.

I saw thy pulse's maddening play
 Wild send thee pleasure's devious way,
 Misled by Fancy's meteor ray,
 By passion driven;
 But yet the *light* that led astray
 Was *light* from Heaven.

I taught thy manners-painting strains,
 The loves, the ways of simple swains,
 Till now, o'er all my wide domains
 Thy fame extends:
 And some, the pride of Coila's plains,
 Become thy friends.

Thou canst not learn, nor can I show,
 To paint with Thomson's landscape glow;
 Or wake the bosom-melting throe,
 With Shenstone's art;
 Or pour, with Gray, the moving flow
 Warm on the heart.

Yet all beneath the unrivall'd rose,
 The lowly daisy sweetly blows;
 Tho' large the forest's monarch throws
 His army shade,
 Yet green the juicy hawthorn grows,
 Adown the glade.

Then never murmur nor repine;
 Strive in thy humble sphere to shine;
 And trust me, not Potosi's¹ mine,
 Nor kings' regard,
 Can give a bliss o'ermatching thine,
 A *rustic Bard*.

To give my counsels all in one,
 Thy tuneful flame still careful fan;

¹ In South America, famed for its gold mines.

Preserve the *Dignity of Man*,
 With soul erect;
 And trust the *Universal Plan*
 Will all protect.

And wear thou this!—she solemn said,
 And bound the *Holly* round my head:
 The polish'd leaves and berries red
 Did rustling play;
 And, like a passing thought, she fled
 In light away.

A DREAM.

Thoughts, words, and deeds, the statute blames with reason,
 But surely *Dreams* were ne'er indicted treason.

[On reading in the public papers, the Laureate's Ode, with the other parade of June 4, 1796, the Author was no sooner dropt asleep, than he imagined himself transported to the birth-day levee; and in his dreaming fancy made the following address.]

GUID-MORNIN' to your Majesty!
 May Heaven augment your blisses,
 On every new *birth-day* ye see,
 A humble poet wishes!
 My Bardship here, at your levee,
 On sic a day as this is,
 Is sure an uncouth sight to see,
 Amang thae¹ birth-day dresses
 Sae fine this day.

I see ye're complimented thrang,²
 By monie a lord and lady;
God save the king! 's a cuckoo sang,
 That 's unco³ easy said ay;
 The *Poets* too, a venal gang,
 Wi' rhymes weel-turn'd and ready,
 Wad gar ye trow⁴ ye ne'er do wrang,
 But ay unerring steady,
 On sic a day.

For me! before a monarch's face,
 Even *there* I winna⁵ flatter;

¹ Among those.—² By a crowd.—³ Very.—⁴ Believe.—⁵ Will not.

For neither pension, post, nor place,
 Am I your humble debtor;
 So, nae reflection on *your grace*,
 Your kingship to bespatter;
 There's monie waur¹ been o' the race,
 And aiblins ane² been better
 Than you this day.

'Tis very true, my sovereign King,
 My skill may weel be doubted;
 But facts are chieles that winna ding,³
 An' downa⁴ be disputed:
 Your royal nest,⁵ beneath your wing,
 Is e'en right reft an' clouted,⁶
 And now the third part o' the string,
 And less, will gang about it.
 Than did ae day.⁷

Far be't frae me that I aspire
 To blame your legislation,
 Or say, ye wisdom want, or fire,
 To rule this mighty nation!
 But, faith! I muckle⁸ doubt, my Sire,
 Ye've trusted ministration
 To chaps, wha in a barn or byre⁹
 Wad better fill'd their station
 Than courts yon day.

And now ye've gien auld Britain peace,
 Her broken shins to plaster:
 Your sair taxation does her fleece,
 Till she has scarce a tester:
 For me, thank God, my life's a *lease*,
 Nae *bargain* wearing faster,
 Or, faith! I fear, that wi' the geese,
 I shortly boost¹⁰ to pasture
 I' the craft¹¹ some day.

I'm no mistrusting Willie Pitt,
 When taxes he enlarges,

¹ Worse.—² Perhaps one.—³ Will not give way.—⁴ Cannot.—⁵ Your dominions.—⁶ Torn and patched.—⁷ Written in allusion to the recent loss of America.—⁸ Must.—⁹ A cow stable.—¹⁰ Must needs.—¹¹ Croft, grass field.

(An' Will 's a true guid fallow's get,
 A name not envy spairges,¹)
 That he intends to pay your debt,
 An' lessen a' your charges;
 But, G-d sake! let nae *saving-fit*
 Abridge your bonnie barges²
 An' boats this day.

Adieu, my liege! may freedom geck³
 Beneath your high protection;
 An' may ye rax⁴ corruption's neck,
 An' gie her for dissection!
 But since I'm here, I'll no neglect,
 In loyal, true affection,
 To pay your Queen, with due respect,
 My fealty an' subjection
 This great birth-day.

Hail, *Majesty most excellent!*
 While nobles strive to please ye,
 Will ye accept a compliment
 A simple Poet gies ye?
 Thae bonnie bairn-time,⁵ Heaven has lent,
 Still higher may they heeze⁶ ye
 In bliss, till fate some day is sent,
 Forever to release ye
 Frae care that day.

For you, young Potentate o' Wales,
 I tell your Highness fairly,
 Down pleasure's stream, wi' swelling sails,
 I'm tauld you're driving rarely;
 But some day ye may gnaw your nails,
 An' curse your folly sairly,
 That e'er you brak Diana's pales,
 Or rattled dice wi' Charlie,
 By night or day.

Yet aft a ragged cowte⁷'s been known
 To mak a noble aiver;⁸
 So, ye may doucely⁹ fill a throne,
 For a' their clish-ma-claver;¹⁰

¹ Soils or disparages.—² Ships of the navy.—³ Hold up her head.—⁴ Stretch.
 —⁵ Family of children.—⁶ Elevate.—⁷ Colt.—⁸ Horse.—⁹ Wisely.—¹⁰ Idle conversation.

There, him at Agincourt¹ wha shone,
 Few better were or braver;
 An' yet wi' funny queer Sir John,²
 He was an unco³ shaver
 For monie a day.

For you, right reverend Osnaburg,
 Nane sets the *lawn-sleeve* sweeter,
 Altho' a ribbon at your lug⁴
 Wad been a dress completer :
 As ye disown yon paughty⁵ dog
 That bears the keys of Peter,
 Then swith!⁶ an' get a wife to hug,
 Or, trouth! ye'll stain the mitre
 Some luckless day.

Young, royal Tarry Breeks,⁷ I learn,
 Ye've lately come athwart her;
 A glorious *galley*,⁸ stem an' stern,
 Weel rigg'd for Venus' barter;
 But first hang out, that she'll discern
 Your hymeneal charter,
 Then heave aboard your grapple airn,⁹
 An' large upo' her quarter
 Come full that day.

Ye, lastly, bonnie blossoms a',
 Ye royal lasses dainty,
 Heaven mak you guid as weel as braw,¹⁰
 An' gie you lads a plenty:
 But sneer na British boys awa',
 For kings are unco scant¹¹ ay;
 An' German gentles are but *sma'*,
 They're better just than *want ay*
 On onie day.

God bless you a', consider now,
 Ye're unco muckle dautet:¹²
 But, ere the course o' life be thro',
 It may be bitter sautet:¹³

¹ King Henry V.—² Sir John Falstaff. *Vide* Shakspeare.—³ Strange, whimsical.—⁴ Ear.—⁵ Proud, haughty.—⁶ Get away.—⁷ Breeches.—⁸ Alluding to the newspaper accounts of a certain royal sailor's amour.—⁹ Iron.—¹⁰ Fine, handsome.—¹¹ Very few.—¹² Very much caressed.—¹³ Salted, pickled.

An' I hae seen their coggie fou,¹
 That yet hae tarrow'd² at it:
 But or the day was done, I trow,
 The laggen³ they hae clautet⁴
 Fu' clean that day.

ADDRESS TO THE DEIL.

O Prince! O Chief of many throned Powers,
 That led th' embattled Seraphim to war.—*Milton.*

O THOU! whatever title suit thee,
 Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie,
 Wha in yon cavern, grim an' sootie,
 Closed under hatches,
 Spairges⁵ about the brunstane cootie,⁶
 To scaud⁷ poor wretches!

Hear me, auld Hangie, for a wee,⁸
 And let poor damned bodies be;
 I'm sure sma⁹ pleasure it can gie,¹⁰
 E'en to a Deil,
 To skelp¹¹ an' scaud poor dogs like me,
 An' hear us squeel!

Great is thy power, an' great thy fame;
 Far kenn'd¹² and noted is thy name;
 An' tho' yon lowin' heugh¹³'s thy hame,
 Thou travels far;
 An' faith! thou's neither lag nor lame,
 Nor blate,¹⁴ nor scaur.¹⁵

Whyles¹⁶ ranging like a roaring lion
 For prey, a' holes an' corners tryin';
 Whyles on the strong-wing'd tempest flyin',
 Tirling¹⁷ the kirks:
 Whyles in the human bosom pryin',
 Unseen thou lurks.

¹ Cup or dish full.—² Murmured.—³ The angle between the side and bottom of a wooden dish.—⁴ Scraped.—⁵ To dash, or throw about.—⁶ Brimstone dish, or ladle.—⁷ Scald.—⁸ Little.—⁹ Small.—¹⁰ Give.—¹¹ Strike, or beat.—¹² Known.—¹³ Flaming pit.—¹⁴ Bashful.—¹⁵ Apt to be scared.—¹⁶ Sometimes.—¹⁷ Uncovering.

I've heard my reverend *grannie* say,
 In lanely glens ye like to stray;
 Or where auld, ruin'd castles, gray,
 Nod to the moon,
 Ye fright the nightly wanderer's way
 Wi' eldritch croon.¹

When twilight did my *graunie* summon,
 To say her prayers, douce,² honest woman!
 Aft yont³ the dyke she's heard you bummin',
 Wi' eerie⁴ drone;
 Or, rustlin', thro' the boortries⁵ comin',
 Wi' heavy groan.

Ae⁶ dreary, windy, winter night,
 The stars shot down wi' sklentín⁷ light;
 Wi' you, mysel, I gat a fright,
 Ayont the lough;⁸
 Ye, like a rash-bush,⁹ stood in sight,
 Wi' waving sugh.¹⁰

The cudgel in my niece¹¹ did shake,
 Each bristled hair stood like a stake,
 When wi' an eldritch stour,¹² quaick—quaick—
 Amang the springs,
 Awa' ye squatter'd¹³ like a drake,
 On whistling wings.

Let *warlocks*¹⁴ grim, an' wither'd *hags*,
 Tell how wi' you on ragweed¹⁵ nags,
 They skim the muirs an' dizzy crags,
 Wi' wicked speed;
 And in kirk-yards renew their leagues
 Owre howkit¹⁶ dead.

¹ Frightful hollow moan.—² Wise, good.—³ Beyond.—⁴ Frighted, or frightful.—⁵ Elder-trees.—⁶ One.—⁷ Glimmering.—⁸ A pool, or sheet of water.—

⁹ A bush, or large tuft of rushes.—¹⁰ Rushing noise of wind or water.—

¹¹ Hand, or fist.—¹² The raising a cloud of dust.—¹³ Fluttered in water.—

¹⁴ Wizards.—¹⁵ Ragwort.

¹⁶ Digged up, or disinterred. Those who are, or were, believers in the old traditions relative to witchcraft, supposed that the incantations of these demoniacs were frequently performed over dead bodies, which they dug, scratched, or conjured out of their graves in order to perform their devilish orgies more effectually.

Thence countra wives wi' toil an' pain,
 May plunge an' plunge the kirk¹ in vain;
 For, oh! the yellow treasure's ta'en
 By witching skill:
 An' dawtit,² twal-pint³ Hawkie's⁴ gaen⁵
 As yell's⁶ the Bill.⁷

Thence mystic knots mak great abuse,
 On young guidmen,⁸ fond, keen, an' crouse;⁹
 When the best wark-lume¹⁰ i' the house,
 By cantrip¹¹ wit,
 Is instant made no worth a louse,
 Just at the bit.

When throwes¹² dissolve the snawy hoord,
 An' float the jingling icy-boord,
 Then *Water kelpies*¹³ haunt the foord,
 By your direction,
 An' 'nighted travellers are allured
 To their destruction.

An' aft your moss-traversing *Spunkies*,¹⁴
 Decoy the wight that late an' drunk is,
 The bleezin', curst, mischievous monkeys
 Delude his eyes,
 Till in some miry slough he sunk is,
 Ne'er mair to rise.

When *Masons'* mystic *word* an' *grip*
 In storms an' tempests raise you up,

¹ Churn. — ² Fondled, caressed. — ³ Twelve-pint. — ⁴ Cow. — ⁵ Gone. — ⁶ Barren.

⁷ Bull.—The literal English meaning of these last two lines is, that a favorite cow, that gave daily twelve Scotch pints of milk (equal to forty-eight English pints), is becoming as barren as a bull, in consequence of witchcraft.

⁸ Men newly married. — ⁹ Courageous.

¹⁰ A working tool. Fully to appreciate the meaning of the stanza beginning "Thence mystic knots," it is necessary for the English reader to know, that a tradition was entertained in Scotland of the power of witchcraft to prevent consummation on the bridal night, by rendering the "young guid man" powerless "just at the bit," or moment when, &c.

¹¹ A charm or spell. — ¹² Thaws.

¹³ A mischievous kind of spirits, said to haunt fords, or ferries, particularly in stormy nights.

¹⁴ Will-o'-the-wisp, or Jack-a-lantern.

Some cock or cat your rage maun stop,
 Or, strange to tell!
 The youngest brother ye wad whip
 Aff straught to h—ll!

Lang syne in Eden's bonnie yard,
 When youthfu' lovers first were pair'd,
 An' a' the soul of love they shared
 The raptured hour,
 Sweet on the fragrant, flowery swaird,
 In shady bower:

Then you, ye auld, snick-drawing' dog!
 Ye came to Paradise *incog*.
 An' played on man a cursed brogue,
 (Black be your fa'!)
 An' gied the infant warld a shog,²
 'Maist ruin'd a'.

D'ye mind that day, when in a bizz,³
 Wi' reekit duds,⁴ an' reestit gizz,⁵
 Ye did present your smoutie⁶ phiz,
 'Mang better folk,
 An' sklentet' on the *man of Uz*
 Your spitefu' joke?

An' how ye gat him i' your thrall,
 An' brak him out o' house an' hall,
 While scabs an' blotches did him gall,
 Wi' bitter claw,
 An' lows'd⁸ his ill-tongued wicked scawl,⁹
 Was warst ava?

But a' your doings to rehearse,
 Your wily snares an' fechtin'¹⁰ fierce,
 Sin' that day Michael¹¹ did you pierce,
 Down to this time,
 Wad ding¹² a' Lallan tongue, or Erse,
 In prose or rhyme.

An' now, auld *Gloots*, I ken ye're thinkin',
 A certain Bardie's rantin', drinkin',

¹ Trick-contriving.—² A violent shock.—³ Bustle.—⁴ Smoky clothes.—

⁵ Withered, or scorched wig.—⁶ Ugly, or smutty.—⁷ Hit aslant, or obliquely.

—⁸ Loosed.—⁹ A scold.—¹⁰ Fighting.—¹¹ Vide Milton, book vi.—¹² Puzzle.

Some luckless hour will send him linkin',¹
 To your black pit;
 But, faith! he'll turn a corner jinkin',²
 An' cheat you yet.

But fare you weel, auld *Nickie-ben*!
 O wad ye tak a thought an' men'!
 Ye aiblins³ might—I dinna ken⁴—
 Still hae a *stake*—
 I'm wae to think upon yon den,
 Even for your sake!⁵

ADDRESS TO EDINBURGH.

EDINA! Scotia's darling seat!
 All hail thy palaces and towers,
 Where once beneath a monarch's feet
 Sat Legislation's sovereign powers!
 From marking wildly-scatter'd flowers,
 As on the banks of Ayr I stray'd,
 And singing, lone, the lingering hours,
 I shelter in thy honor'd shade.

Here Wealth still swells the golden tide,
 As busy Trade his labors plies;
 There Architecture's noble pride
 Bids elegance and splendor rise;
 Here Justice, from her native skies,
 High wields her balance and her rod;
 There Learning, with his eagle eyes,
 Seeks Science in her coy abode.

Thy sons, Edina, social, kind,
 With open arms the stranger hail;
 Their views enlarged, their liberal mind,
 Above the narrow, rural vale;
 Attentive still to sorrow's wail,
 Or modest merit's silent claim;

¹ Tripping.—² Dodging.—³ Perhaps.—⁴ Do not know.

⁵ Written in the winter of 1784-5. "The idea of an Address to the Deil was suggested to the poet, by running over in his mind the many ludicrous accounts and representations we have, from various quarters, of this august personage."—*Gilbert Burns*.

And never may their sources fail!
And never envy blot their name!

Thy daughters bright thy walks adorn!
Gay as the gilded summer sky,
Sweet as the dewy milk-white thorn,
Dear as the raptured thrill of joy!
Fair Burnet¹ strikes th' adoring eye,
Heaven's beauties on my fancy shine,
I see the Sire of love on high,
And own his work indeed divine!

There, watching high the least alarms,
Thy rough, rude fortress gleams afar;
Like some bold veteran, gray in arms,
And mark'd with many a seamy scar;
The ponderous wall and massy bar,
Grim-rising o'er the rugged rock;
Have oft withstood assailing war,
And oft repell'd the invader's shock.

With awe-struck thought, and pitying tears,
I view that noble, stately dome,
Where Scotia's kings of other years,
Famed heroes, had their royal home.
Alas! how changed the times to come;
Their royal name low in the dust!
Their hapless race wild-wandering roam!
Tho' rigid law cries out, 'twas just!

Wild beats my heart to trace your steps,
Whose ancestors, in days of yore,
Thro' hostile ranks and ruin'd gaps,
Old Scotia's bloody lion bore:
Even I who sing in rustic lore,
Haply my sires have left their shed,
And faced grim danger's loudest roar,
Bold-following where your fathers led!

Edina! Scotia's darling seat!
All hail thy palaces and towers,
Where once beneath a monarch's feet
Sat Legislation's sovereign powers!

¹ Miss Burnet of Monboddo.

From marking wildly-scatter'd flowers,
 As on the banks of Ayr I stray'd,
 And singing, lone, the lingering hours,
 I shelter in thy honor'd shade.¹

ADDRESS TO THE SHADE OF THOMSON,
 ON CROWNING HIS BUST, AT EDNAM, ROXBURGHSHIRE, WITH BAYS.

[Written by desire of the poet's friend, the Earl of Buchan.]

WHILE virgin Spring, by Eden's flood,
 Unfolds her tender mantle green,
 Or pranks the sod in frolic mood,
 Or' tunes Eolian strains between:

While Summer, with a matron grace,
 Retreats to Dryburgh's cooling shade,
 Yet oft, delighted, stops to trace
 The progress of the spiky blade:

While Autumn, benefactor kind,
 By Tweed erects his aged head,
 And sees, with self-approving mind,
 Each creature on his bounty fed:

While maniac Winter rages o'er
 The hills whence classic Yarrow flows,
 Rousing the turbid torrent's roar,
 Or sweeping wild, a waste of snows:

So long, sweet Poet of the Year,
 Shall bloom that wreath thou well hast won;
 While SCOTIA, with exulting tear,
 Proclaims that THOMSON was her son.

THE POET'S WELCOME

TO HIS ILLEGITIMATE CHILD.²

THOU' s welcome, wean, mishanter fa' me,
 If aught of thee or of thy mammy,

¹ This poem is chiefly remarkable for the grand stanzas on the castle and Holyrood with which it concludes.—*Lockhart*.

² This "Address" is omitted by Dr. Currie, and as its contents are rather of too indelicate a complexion to need elucidation, the commentator has withheld his pen.

Shall ever danton me or awe me,
 My sweet wee lady,
 Or if I blush when thou shalt ca' me
 Tit-ta or daddy.

Wee image of my bonnie Betty,
 I, fatherly, will kiss an' daut thee,
 As dear an' near my heart I set thee,
 Wi' as gude will,
 As a' the priests had seen me get
 That's out o' h-ll.

What tho' they ca' me fornicator,
 An' tease my name in kintry-clatter:
 The mair they tauk I'm kent the better,
 E'en let them clash;
 An auld wife's tongue's a feckless matter
 To gie ane fash.

Sweet fruit o' monie a merry dint,
 My funny toil is now a' tint,
 Sin' thou came to the warl' asklent,
 Which fools may scoff at;
 In my last plack thy part's be in 't—
 The better half o't.

An' if thou be what I wad hae thee,
 An' tak the counsel I shall gie thee,
 A lovin' father I'll be to thee,
 If thou be spared;
 Thro' a' thy childish years I'll e'e thee,
 An' think 't weel war'd.

Gude grant that thou may ay inherit
 Thy mither's person, grace, an' merit,
 An' thy poor worthless daddy's spirit,
 Without his failin's!
 'Twill please me mair to hear an' see 't
 Than stocket mailins.

TO A HAGGIS.¹

FAIR fa' your honest, sonsie² face,
 Great chieftain o' the puddin'-race!
 Aboon³ them a' ye tak your place,
 Painch,⁴ tripe, or thairm:⁵
 Weel are ye wordy⁶ of a *grace*
 As lang's my arm.

The groaning trencher there ye fill,
 Your hurdies like a distant hill,
 Your pin wad help to mend a mill
 In time o' need,
 While thro' your pores the dews distil
 Like amber bead.

His knife see rustic labor dight,⁷
 An' cut you up wi' ready slight,
 Trenching your gushing entrails bright
 Like onie ditch;
 And then, O what a glorious sight,
 Warm-reeking rich!

Then horn for horn⁸ they stretch an' strive:
 Deil tak the hindmost! on they drive,
 Till a' their weel-swallow'd kytes⁹ belyve¹⁰
 Are bent like drums,
 Then auld guidman, maist like to rive,¹¹
 *Bethankit*¹² hums.

Is there that o'er his French *ragout*,
 Or *olio* that wad staw¹³ a sow,
 Or *fricassee* wad make her spew
 Wi' perfect sconner,¹⁴
 Looks down wi' sneering, scornfu' view
 On sic a dinner?

Poor devil! see him owre his trash,
 As feckless¹⁵ as a wither'd rash,

¹ A kind of pudding boiled in the stomach of a cow, or sheep.—² Engaging, pleasing.—³ Above.—⁴ Paunch.—⁵ A small gut.—⁶ Worthy.—⁷ Wipe clean.—⁸ A spoon made of horn.—⁹ Bellies.—¹⁰ By and by.—¹¹ To split.—¹² Grace after meat.—¹³ Surfeit.—¹⁴ Loathing.—¹⁵ Puny, weak.

His spindle-shank a guid whip-lash,
 His nieve¹ a nit;²
 Thro' bloody flood or field to dash,
 O how unfit!

But mark the rustic, *haggis-fed*,
 The trembling earth resounds his tread,
 Clap in his walie³ nieve a blade,
 He'll mak it whissle;
 An' legs, an' arms, an' heads will sned,⁴
 Like taps o' thrissle.⁵

Ye Powers wha mak mankind your care,
 And dish them out their bill o' fare,
 Auld Scotland wants nae skinking⁶ ware
 That jaups⁷ in luggies⁸;
 But, if ye wish her gratefu' prayer,
 Gie her a *Haggis*!

ADDRESS TO THE TOOTHACHE.

My curse upon thy venom'd stang,
 That shoots my tortured gums alang;
 And thro' my lugs⁹ gies monie a twang,
 Wi' gnawing vèngeance;
 Tearing my nerves wi' bitter pang,
 Like racking engines.

When fevers burn, or ague freezes,
 Rheumatics gnaw, or colic squeezes;
 Our neighbor's sympathy may ease us,
 Wi' pitying moan;
 But thee—thou hell o' a' diseases,
 Ay mocks our groan!

Adown my beard the slavers trickle!
 I throw the wee stools o'er the mickle,¹⁰

¹ The fist.—² Nut.—³ Large, ample.—⁴ To lop off.—⁵ Tops of thistles.—
⁶ Small portions.—⁷ A jerk of waters, or a thin potion that will jerk or quash
 like water.—⁸ A small wooden dish with a handle.—⁹ Ears.—¹⁰ The
 greater.

As round the fire the giglets¹ keckle²
 To see me loup;³
 While, raving mad, I wish a heckle⁴
 Were in their doup.⁵

O' a' the numerous human dools,⁶
 Ill har'sts,⁷ daft bargains,⁸ *cutty-stools*,⁹
 Or worthy friends raked i' the mools,¹⁰
 Sad sight to see!
 The tricks o' knaves, or fash¹¹ o' fools,
 Thou bear'st the-gree.¹²

Where'er that place be priests ca' hell,
 Whence a' the tones o' misery yell,
 And ranked plagues their numbers tell,
 In dreadfu' raw,¹³
 Thou, Toothache, surely bear'st the bell
 Aboon¹⁴ them a'!

O thou grim, mischief-making chiel',
 That gars¹⁵ the notes of *discord* squeel,
 Till daft mankind aft dance a reel
 In gore a shoe-thick,—
 Gie a' the faes o' Scotland's weal
 A towmond's¹⁶ Toothache!

TO A POSTHUMOUS CHILD,

BORN IN PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES OF DISTRESS.

SWEET floweret, pledge o' meikle¹⁷ love,
 And ward o' monie a prayer,
 What heart o' stane wad thou na move,
 Sae helpless, sweet, and fair!

November hirples¹⁸ o'er the lea,
 Chill, on thy lovely form;

- Fools.—² Laugh.—³ Leap, jump.

⁴ A board in which are driven a number of sharp iron pins, used for dressing hemp, flax, &c.

⁵ Backside.—⁶ Sorrows.—⁷ Bad harvests.—⁸ Foolish bargains.—⁹ Stool of repentance.—¹⁰ Laid in the grave.—¹¹ Trouble.—¹² The victory.—¹³ Row.—¹⁴ Above.—¹⁵ Makes.—¹⁶ A twelvemonth.—¹⁷ Much.—¹⁸ Creeps, or limps.

And gane, alas! the shelt'ring tree,
Should shield thee frae the storm.

May He, who gives the rain to pour,
And wings the blast to blaw,
Protect thee frae the driving shower,
The bitter frost and snaw!

May He, the friend of woe and want,
Who heals life's various stounds,¹
Protect and guard the mother-plant,
And heal her cruel wounds!

But late she flourish'd, rooted fast,
Fair on the summer morn;
Now, feebly bends she in the blast,
Unshelter'd and forlorn.

Blest be thy bloom, thou lovely gem,
Unscathed² by ruffian hand!
And from thee many a parent stem
Arise to deck our land!

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY,

On turning one down with the plough, in April, 1780.

WEE,³ modest, crimson-tippéd flower,
Thou 'st met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush amang the stoure⁴
Thy slender stem;
To spare thee now is past my power,
Thou bonnie gem.

Alas! it's no⁵ thy neebor sweet!
The bonnie *Lark*, companion meet!
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet!⁶
Wi' spreckled breast,
When upward-springing, blythe, to greet
The purpling East.

Cauld blew the bitter-biting North
Upon thy early, humble birth,

¹ Acute pains.—² Unhurt.—³ Small.—⁴ Dust.—⁵ Not.—⁶ Wet, wetness.

Yet cheerfully thou glinted¹ forth
 Amid the storm,
 Scarce rear'd above the parent earth
 Thy tender form.

The flaunting flowers our gardens yield,
 High sheltering woods and wa's maun shield;
 But thou, beneath the random bield²
 O' clod or stane,
 Adorns the histie³ *stibble-field*,
 Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
 Thy snawie bosom sunward spread,
 Thou lifts thy unassuming head
 In humble guise;
 But now the *share* up-tears thy bed,
 And low thou lies!

Such is the fate of artless Maid,
 Sweet *flow'ret* of the rural shade!
 By love's simplicity betray'd,
 And guileless trust,
 Till she, like thee, all soil'd, is laid
 Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple Bard,
 On life's rough ocean luckless starr'd:
 Unskilful he to note the card
 Of *prudent lore*,
 Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
 And whelm him o'er!

Such fate to *suffering worth* is given,
 Who long with wants and woes has striven,
 By human pride or cunning driven,
 To mis'ry's brink,
 Till wrenched of ev'ry stay but *Heaven*,
 He, ruin'd, sink!

Even thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine—no distant date;

¹ Peeped.—² Shelter.—³ Dry, chapt, barren.

Stern Ruin's *plough-share* drives, elate,
 Full on thy bloom,
 Till crush'd beneath the furrow's weight,
 Shall be thy doom!¹

TO A MOUSE,

On turning her up in her nest, with the plough, November, 1785.

WEE, sleekit,² cow'rin',³ tim'rous beastie,
 Oh, what a panic's in thy breastie!
 Thou need na start a'wa' sae hasty,
 Wi' bick'rin' brattle!⁴
 I wad be laith⁵ to rin an' chase thee,
 Wi' murd'ring *pattle*.⁶
 I'm truly sorry man's dominion
 Has broken Nature's social union,
 An' justifies that ill opinion
 Which makes thee startle
 At me, thy poor earth-born companion,
 An' *fellow-mortal*.
 I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve:
 What then? poor beastie, thou maun live;
 A *daimen icker*⁷ in a *thrave*⁸
 'S a sma' request:
 I'll get a blessing wi' the lave,⁹
 And never miss 't.
 Thy wee bit *housie*, too, in ruin!
 Its silly wa's the wins¹⁰ are strewin'!
 An' naething, now, to big¹¹ a new ane,
 O' foggage¹² green!
 An' bleak December's wins ensuin',
 Baith snell¹³ and keen!

¹ When Burns first arrived in Edinburgh, the "*Lounger*," a weekly paper, edited by Henry Mackenzie, Esq., author of the "*Man of Feeling*," was in course of publication. In that periodical a whole number (the "*Lounger* for Saturday, December 9, 1786") was devoted to "An account of Robert Burns, the Ayrshire ploughman," in which were given the address "To a Mountain Daisy," and an extract from the "*Vision*," as specimens of his poetry.

² Sleek.—³ Cowering.—⁴ A short race.—⁵ Loth.—⁶ Plough-staff.—⁷ An ear of corn now and then.—⁸ A shock of corn.—⁹ The rest.—¹⁰ Winds.—¹¹ To build.—¹² Aftergrass.—¹³ Bitter, biting.

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
 And weary winter comin' fast,
 An' cozie¹ here, beneath the blast,
 Thou thought to dwell,
 Till, crash! the cruel *coulter* pass'd
 Out thro' thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,
 Has cost thee monie a weary nibble!
 Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
 But² house or hald,³
 To thole⁴ the winter's sleety dribble,
 An' cranreuch⁵ could!

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,⁶
 In proving *foresight* may be vain:
 The best-laid schemes o' *mice* an' *men*,
 Gang aft a-gley,⁷
 And lea'e us naught but grief and pain,
 For promised joy.

Still thou art blest, compared wi' *me*!
 The *present* only toucheth thee:
 But, och! I backward cast my e'e,
 On prospects drear!
 An' forward, tho' I canna *see*,
 I *guess* an' *fear*.⁸

L I N E S

ON SCARING SOME WATER-FOWL IN LOCH-TURIT,

A wild scene among the hills of Ouchtertyre.

WHY, ye tenants of the lake,
 For me your watery haunt forsake?
 Tell me, fellow-creatures, why
 At my presence thus you fly?
 Why disturb your social joys,

¹ Snugly.—² Without.—³ Hold, home.—⁴ To endure.—⁵ The hoar frost.—
⁶ Not alone.—⁷ Off the right time.

⁸ "The verses to the Mouse, and Mountain Daisy, were composed on the occasions mentioned, and while the author was holding the plough."—*Gilbert Burns*.

Parent, filial, kindred ties,—
Common friend to you and me,
Nature's gifts to all are free :
Peaceful keep your dimpling wave,
Busy feed, or wanton lave ;
Or beneath the shelt'ring rock,
Bide the surging billow's shock.

Conscious, blushing for our race,
Soon, too soon, your fears I trace :
Man, your proud usurping foe,
Would be lord of all below ;
Plumes himself in Freedom's pride,
Tyrant stern to all beside.

The eagle from the clifty brow,
Marking you his prey below,
In his breast no pity dwells,
Strong necessity compels :
But Man, to whom alone is given
A ray direct from pitying Heaven,
Glories in his heart humane—
And creatures for his pleasure slain.

In these savage, liquid plains,
Only known to wandering swains,
Where the mossy rivulet strays,
Far from human haunts and ways ;
All on Nature you depend,
And life's poor season peaceful spend.

Or, if man's superior might,
Dare invade your native right,
On the lofty ether borne,
Man with all his powers you scorn ;
Swiftly seek on clanging wings,
Other lakes and other springs ;
And the foe you cannot brave,
Scorn at least to be his slave.

SONNET.

WRITTEN JANUARY 25, 1793, THE BIRTH-DAY OF THE
AUTHOR,

On hearing a thrush in a morning walk.

SING on, sweet thrush, upon the leafless bough ;
Sing on, sweet bird, I listen to thy strain ;
See aged Winter, 'mid his surly reign,
At thy blythe carol clears his furrow'd brow .

So in lone Poverty's dominion drear,
Sits meek Content with light, unanxious heart,
Welcomes the rapid moments, bids them part,
Nor asks if they bring aught to hope or fear.

I thank thee, Author of this opening day !
Thou whose bright sun now gilds yon orient skies !
Riches denied, thy boon was purer joys,
What wealth could never give nor take away !

Yet come, thou child of Poverty and Care ;
The mite high Heaven bestow'd, that mite with thee
I'll share.

VERSES

On seeing a wounded hare limp by me, which a fellow had just shot.

INHUMAN man ! curse on thy barbarous art,
And blasted be thy murder-aiming eye :
May never Pity soothe thee with a sigh,
Nor ever Pleasure glad thy cruel heart !

Go, live, poor wanderer of the wood and field,
The bitter little that of life remains :
No more the thickening brakes and verdant plains
To thee shall home, or food, or pastime yield.

Seek, mangled wretch, some place of wonted rest—
No more of rest, but now thy dying bed !
The sheltering rushes whistling o'er thy head,
The cold earth with thy bloody bosom press'd.



On five pence, with a horse and a dog, and a dog,
 To the other five pence of the same name,
 No more for the five pence of the same name,
 To the same, no more for the same, of the same name.

Oft as by winding Nith I, musing, wait
 The sober eve, or hail the cheerful dawn,
 I'll miss thee sporting o'er the dewy lawn,
 And curse the ruffian's aim, and mourn thy help-
 less fate.

THE AULD FARMER'S

NEW-YEAR MORNING SALUTATION TO HIS AULD MARE

MAGGIE, *(house)*

On giving her the accustomed ripp of corn to hanel in the New-Year.

A GUID new year, I wish thee, Maggie!
 Hae there's a ripp¹ to thy auld baggie;²
 Tho' thou's howe-backit,³ now, an' knaggie,⁴
 I've seen the day
 Thou could hae gaen like onie staggie⁵
 Out-owre the lay.
 Tho' now thou's dowie,⁶ stiff, an' crazy,
 An' thy auld hide's as white's a daisy,
 I've seen thee dappled, sleek, and glaizie,⁷
 A bonnie gray;
 He should been tight that daur't to *raise*⁸ thee,
 Ance in a day.
 Thou ance was i' the foremost rank,
 A *filly*, buirdly,⁹ steeve,¹⁰ an' swank,¹¹
 An' set weel down a shapely shank,
 As e'er tread yird;¹²
 An' could hae flown out-owre a stank,¹³
 Like onie bird.
 It's now some nine-an'-twenty year,
 Sin' thou was my guid-father's *meere*;
 He gied me thee, o' tocher¹⁴ clear,
 An' fifty mark;
 Tho' it was sma', 'twas weel won gear,
 An' thou was stark.¹⁵

¹ A handful of unthreshed corn.—² Belly.—³ Sunk in the back.—⁴ Like knaggs, or points of rocks.—⁵ Diminutive of stag.—⁶ Worn with fatigue.—⁷ Smooth like glass.—⁸ To inflame, or madden.—⁹ Stout made.—¹⁰ Firm, compacted.—¹¹ Stately.—¹² Earth.—¹³ A pool of standing water.—¹⁴ A marriage portion.—¹⁵ Stout.

When first I gaed to woo my Jenny,
 Ye then was trottin' wi' your minnie:¹
 Tho' ye was trickie, slee, an' funnie,
 Ye ne'er was donsie;²
 But hamely, tawie,³ quiet, an' cannie,
 An' unco sonsie.⁴

That day ye danced wi' muckle pride,
 When ye bure hame my bonnie *bride*;
 An' sweet an' gracefu' she did ride,
 Wi' maiden air!
 Kyle Stewart⁵ I could bragged⁶ wide,
 For sic a pair.

Tho' now ye dow⁷ but hoyte⁸ and hobble,
 An' wintle like a saumont-cobble,⁹
 That day ye was a jinker¹⁰ noble,
 For heels an' win'!
 An' ran them till they a' did wauble,¹¹
 Far, far behin'.

When thou an' I were young an' skeigh,¹²
 An' stable-meals at fairs were dreigh,¹³
 How thou wad prance, an' snore, an' skreigh,¹⁴
 An' tak the road!
 Town's bodies¹⁵ ran and stood abeigh,¹⁶
 And ca't thee mad.

When thou was corn't,¹⁷ an' I was mellow,
 We took the road ay like a swallow:
 At Brooses¹⁸ thou had ne'er a fellow,
 For pith an' speed;
 But ev'ry tail thou paid them hollow,
 Where'er thou gaed.

The sma', droop-rumpl't,¹⁹ hunter-cattle,
 Might aiblins²⁰ waur't²¹ thee for a brattle;²²

¹ Mother, dam.—² Unlucky.—³ Peaceable to be handled.—⁴ Good-looking.
 —⁵ A district in Aberdeenshire.—⁶ Challenged.—⁷ Can.—⁸ Amble crazily.—
⁹ Salmon fishing-boat.—¹⁰ That turns quickly.—¹¹ To reel.—¹² Proud, high-
 mettled.—¹³ Tedious, long about it.—¹⁴ To scream.—¹⁵ Town people.—¹⁶ At
 a shy distance.—¹⁷ Well fed with oats.

¹⁸ A race at country weddings, who shall first reach the bridegroom's house
 on returning from church.

¹⁹ That droops at the crupper.—²⁰ Perhaps.—²¹ Worsted.—²² A short
 race.

But sax Scotch miles, thou try't their mettle
 An' gar't them whaizle:¹
 Nae whip nor spur, but just a wattle²
 O' saugh³ or hazle.

Thou was a noble *fittie-lan'*,⁴
 As e'er in tug or tow⁵ was drawn!
 Aft thee an' I, in aught⁶ hours gaun,⁷
 On guid March weather,
 Hae turn'd sax⁸ rood beside our han'
 For days thegither.

Thou never braindg't,⁹ an' fecht,¹⁰ an' fliskit,¹¹
 But thy auld tail thou wad hae whiskit,
 An' spread abreed thy weel-fill'd brisket,¹²
 Wi' pith and power,
 Till spritty knowes¹³ wad rair't and risket,¹⁴
 And slypet¹⁵ owre.

When frosts lay lang an' snaws were deep,
 An' threaten'd labor back to keep,
 I gied thy cog¹⁶ a wee bit heap
 Aboon the timmer;¹⁷
 I kenn'd my Maggie wad na sleep
 For that, or simmer.¹⁸

In cart or car thou never reestit;¹⁹
 The steyest brae²⁰ thou wad hae faced it;
 Thou never lap,²¹ and stent,²² and breastit,²³
 Then stood to blaw;
 But just thy step a wee thing hastit,²⁴
 Thou snoov't²⁵ awa.

My *pleugh* is now thy bairn-time a';²⁶
 Four gallant brutes as e'er did draw:

¹ Made them wheeze.—² A twig.—³ Willow.—⁴ The near-horse of the hindmost pair in the plough.—⁵ Rope.—⁶ Eight.—⁷ Going.—⁸ Six.—⁹ Reeled forward.—¹⁰ Fought.—¹¹ Fretted.—¹² The breast.—¹³ Small hills full of tough-rooted plants or weeds.—¹⁴ Make a noise like the tearing of roots.—¹⁵ Fell.—¹⁶ Wooden dish.—¹⁷ Above the brim.—¹⁸ Summer.—¹⁹ Stood restive.—²⁰ Steepest hill.—²¹ Leaped.—²² Reared.—²³ Sprung up, or forward.—²⁴ Hastened.—²⁵ Went smoothly.—²⁶ All the team belonging to my plough are of thy brood.

Forbye sax mae I've sell't awa',¹
 That thou hast nurst:
 They drew me thretteen pund an' twa'²
 The vera warst.

Monie a sair darg³ we twa hae wrought,
 An' wi' the weary warl' fought!
 An' monie an anxious day I thought
 We wad be beat!
 Yet here to crazy age we're brought
 Wi' something yet.

An' think na', my auld trusty servan',
 That now perhaps thou's less deservin',
 An' thy auld days may end in starvin'
 For my last *fou*,⁴
 A heapet⁵ *stimpert*,⁶ I'll reserve ane,
 Laid by for you.

We've worn to crazy years thegither;
 We'll toyte⁷ about wi' ane anither;
 Wi' tentie⁸ care I'll flit thy tether,
 To some hain'd⁹ rig,
 Where ye may nobly rax¹⁰ your leather,
 Wi' sma' fatigue.

THE DEATH AND DYING WORDS OF POOR MAILIE,

The Author's only pet yowe.

AN UNCO MOURNFU' TALE.

As Mailie, an' her lambs thegither,
 Were ae day nibbling on the tether,
 Upon her cloot¹¹ she coost¹² a hitch,
 An' owre she warsled¹³ in the ditch:
 There, groaning, dying, she did lie,
 When Hughoc¹⁴ he came doytin'¹⁵ by.

¹ Besides six more which I have sold.

² Thirteen pounds and two—perhaps fifteen pounds is here meant, as the poet praises the goodness of Maggie's stock,

³ Day's labor.—⁴ My last drinking bout.—⁵ Heaped.—⁶ The eighth part of a bushel.—⁷ Totter.—⁸ Cautious.—⁹ Spared.—¹⁰ Stretch.—¹¹ Hoof.—¹² Did cast.—¹³ Wrestled, or fell struggling.—¹⁴ A neebor herd callan.—¹⁵ Stupidly.

Wi' glowrin' een,¹ an lifted han's,
 Poor Hughoc like a statue stan's;
 He saw her days were near-hand ended,
 But, waes my heart! he could na mend it;
 He gapéd wide, but naething spak!
 At length poor Mailie silence brak:

"O thou, whase lamentable face
 Appears to mourn my wofu' case!
 My *dying words* attentive hear,
 And bear them to my Master dear.

"Tell him, if e'er again he keep
 As muckle gear as buy a sheep,
 Oh, bid him never tie them mair
 Wi' wicked strings o' hemp or hair!
 But ca' them out to park or hill,
 An' let them wander at their will;
 So may his flock increase, and grow
 To scores o' lambs, and packs o' woo'!

"Tell him he was a Master kin',
 An' ay was guid to me and mine;
 An' now my dying charge I gie him,
 My helpless lambs I trust them wi' him.

"Oh, bid him save their harmless lives,
 Frae dogs, an' tods,² an' butchers' knives!
 But gie them good cow-milk their fill,
 Till they be fit to fend themsel':
 An' tent them duly, e'en and morn,
 Wi' teats o' hay an' rips o' cern.

"An' may they never learn the gaets³
 Of ither vile wanrestfu⁴ *pets*;
 To slink thro' slaps,⁵ an' reave,⁶ an' steal,
 At stacks o' pease or stocks o' kail.
 So may they, like their great forbears,⁷
 For monie a year come thro' the shears:
 So wives will gie them bits o' bread,
 An' bairns greet⁸ for them when they're dead

"My poor *toop-lamb*,⁹ my son an' heir,
 Oh, bid him breed him up wi' care!
 An' if he live to be a beast,
 To pit some havins¹⁰ in his breast!

¹ Staring eyes.—² Foxes.—³ Manners.—⁴ Restless.—⁵ Gates.—⁶ Rove.—
⁷ Forefathers.—⁸ Weep.—⁹ Ram-lamb.—¹⁰ Good-manners.

An' warn him, what I winna name,
 To stay content wi' yowes¹ at hame;
 An' no to rin an' wear his cloots²
 Like ither menseless,³ graceless brutes.

"An' niest⁴ my *yowie*, silly thing,
 Gude⁵ keep thee frae a tether string!
 Oh, may thou ne'er forgather⁶ up
 Wi' onie blastit,⁷ moorland toop;⁸
 But ay keep mind to moop⁹ an' mell¹⁰
 Wi' sheep o' credit like thysel!

"And now, my bairns, wi' my last breath,
 I lea'e my blessin' wi' you baith;
 An' when you think upo' your mither,
 Mind to be kin' to ane anither.

"Now, honest Hughoc, dinna fail
 To tell my Master a' my tale;
 An' bid him burn this curséd tether,
 An' for thy pains, thou's get my blether."¹¹

This said, poor Mailie turn'd her head,
 An' closed her een¹² amang the dead.

POOR MAILIE'S ELEGY.

LAMENT in rhyme, lament in prose,
 Wi' saut¹³ tears trickling down your nose;
 Our Bardie's fate is at a close,
 Past a' remead;¹⁴
 The last sad cap-stane¹⁵ of his woes;
 Poor Mailie's dead!

It's no the loss o' warl's gear,
 That could sae bitter draw the tear,
 Or mak our Bardie, dowie,¹⁶ wear
 The mourning weed.
 He's lost a friend and neebor dear,
 In Mailie dead.

Thro' a' the town she trotted by him;
 A lang half mile she could descry him;

¹ Ewes.—² Hoofs.—³ Ill-bred.—⁴ Next.—⁵ God.—⁶ To meet.—⁷ Blasted.—
⁸ Ram.—⁹ To nibble as a sheep.—¹⁰ Meddle.—¹¹ Bladder.—¹² Eyes.—¹³ Salt.
¹⁴ Remedy.—¹⁵ Cope-stone, or top-stone.—¹⁶ Worn with grief.

Wi' kindly bleat, when she did spy him,
 She ran wi' speed :
 A friend mair faithfu' ne'er cam nigh him,
 Than Mailie dead.

I wat she was a sheep o' sense,
 An' could behave herself wi' mense :¹
 I'll say 't, she never brak a fence
 Thro' thievish greed ;²
 Our Bardie, lanely, keeps the spence³
 Sin' Mailie's dead.

Or, if he wanders up the howe,⁴
 Her living image in her *yowe*
 Comes bleating to him, o'er the knowe,
 For bits o' bread ;
 An' down the briny pearls rowe⁵
 For Mailie dead.

She was nae get o' moorland tips,⁶
 Wi' tauted ket⁷ an' hairy hips ;
 For her forbears⁸ were brought in ships
 Frae 'yont the Tweed ;
 A bonnier *fleesh*⁹ ne'er cross'd the clips
 Than Mailie dead.

Wae worth the man wha first did shape
 That vile wanchancie¹⁰ thing—a *rape*!¹¹
 It maks guid fellows girn¹² an' gape,
 Wi' chokin' dread ;
 An' Robin's bonnet wave wi' crape,
 For Mailie dead.

Oh, a' ye bards on bonnie Doon !
 An' wha on Ayr your chanter's tune !
 Come, join the melancholious croon¹³
 O' Robin's reed !
 His heart will never get aboon
 His Mailie dead !

¹ Decency.—² Greediness.—³ The country parlor.—⁴ A hollow, or dell.—

⁵ Roll.—⁶ Ram.—⁷ Matted fleece.—⁸ Progenitors.—⁹ Fleece.—¹⁰ Unlucky.—

¹¹ Rope.—¹² To twist the features in agony.—¹³ A hollow moan.

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF BRUAR WATER,¹

To the noble Duke of Athole.

MY Lord, I know your noble ear
 Woe ne'er assails in vain;
 Embolden'd thus, I beg you'll hear
 Your humble slave complain,
 How saucy Phœbus' scorching beams,
 In flaming summer-pride,
 Dry-withering, waste my foamy streams,
 And drink my crystal tide.

The lightly-jumping glowrin'² trouts,
 That thro' my waters play,
 If, in their random, wanton spouts,
 They near the margin stray;
 If, hapless chance! they linger lang,
 I'm scorching up so shallow,
 They're left the whit'ning stanes amang,
 In grasping death to wallow.

Last day I grat³ wi' spite and teen,⁴
 As Poet *Burns* came by,
 That, to a Bard, I should be seen
 Wi' half my channel dry:
 A panegyric rhyme, I ween,
 E'en as I was he shor'd⁵ me;
 But had I in my glory been,
 He, kneeling, wad adored me.

Here, foaming down the shelvy rocks,
 In twisting strength I rin;
 There, high my boiling torrent smokes,
 Wild-roaring o'er a linn;⁶
 Enjoying large each spring and well,
 As Nature gave them me,
 I am, altho' I say't mysel,
 Worth gaun'⁷ a mile to see.

¹ Bruar Falls, in Athole, are exceedingly picturesque and beautiful; but the effect is much impaired by the want of trees and shrubs.

² Staring.—³ Wept.—⁴ Grief, sorrow.—⁵ Offered.—⁶ A precipice, or waterfall.—⁷ Going.

Would then my noble master please
 To grant my highest wishes,
 He'll shade my banks wi' tow'ring trees,
 And bonnie spreading bushes;
 Delighted doubly then, my Lord,
 You'll wander on my banks,
 And listen monie a grateful bird
 Return you tuneful thanks.

The sober lav'rock¹ warbling wild,
 Shall to the skies aspire;
 The gowdspink,² music's gayest child,
 Shall sweetly join the choir:
 The blackbird strong, the lintwhite³ clear,
 The mavis⁴ mild and mellow;
 The robin pensive autumn cheer,
 In all her locks of yellow:

This, too, a covert shall insure,
 To shield them from the storm;
 And coward maukin⁵ sleep secure,
 Low in her grassy form:
 Here shall the shepherd make his seat,
 To weave his crown of flowers;
 Or find a shelt'ring, safe retreat,
 From prone descending showers.

And here, by sweet, endearing stealth,
 Shall meet the loving pair,
 Despising worlds with all their wealth,
 As empty, idle care.
 The flowers shall vie in all their charms,
 The hour of heaven to grace,
 And birks⁶ extend their fragrant arms,
 To screen the dear embrace.

Here haply too, at vernal dawn,
 Some musing Bard may stray,
 And eye the smoking dewy lawn,
 And misty mountain, gray;
 Or, by the reaper's nightly beam,
 Mild-check'ring thro' the trees,

¹ Lark.—² Goldfinch.—³ Linnet.—⁴ Thrush.—⁵ The hare.—⁶ Birch-trees.

Rave to my darkly dashing stream,
Hoarse-swelling on the breeze.

Let lofty firs and ashes cool
My lowly banks o'erspread,
And view, deep-bending in the pool,
Their shadows' wat'ry bed :
Let fragrant birks,¹ in woodbines drest,
My craggy cliffs adorn ;
And for the little songster's nest,
The close embow'ring thorn.

So may old Scotia's darling hope,
Your little angel band,
Spring, like their fathers, up to prop
Their honor'd native land !
So may, thro' Albion's farthest ken,
To social-flowing glasses,
The grace be—"Athole's honest men,
And Athole's bonnie lasses!"

THE BRIGS² OF AYR.

Inscribed to J. Ballantyne, Esq., Ayr.

THE simple Bard, rough at the rustic plough,
Learning his tuneful trade from ev'ry bough ;
The chanting linnet, or the mellow thrush,
Hailing the setting sun, sweet, in the green thorn-bush ;
The soaring lark, the perching red-breast shrill,
Or deep-toned plovers, gray, wild whistling o'er the hill ;
Shall he, nursed in the peasant's lowly shed,
To hardy Independence bravely bred,
By early Poverty to hardship steel'd,
And train'd to arms in stern Misfortune's field ;
Shall he be guilty of their hireling crimes,
The servile, mercenary Swiss of rhymes ?
Or labor hard the panegyric close,
With all the venal soul of dedicating Prose ?
No ! though his artless strains he rudely sings,
And throws his hand uncouthly o'er the strings,

¹ Birch-trees.—² Bridges.

He glows with all the spirit of the Bard—
 Fame, honest fame, his great, his dear reward!
 Still, if some patron's generous care he trace,
 Skill'd, in the secret, to bestow with grace;
 When Ballantyne¹ befriends his humble name,
 And hands the rustic stranger up to fame,
 With heart-felt throes his grateful bosom swells,
 The god-like bliss, to give, alone excels.

* * * * *

'Twas when the stacks get on their winter-hap,²
 And thack and rape³ secure the toil-won crap;
 Potatoo-bings are snugged up frae skaith⁴
 Of coming Winter's biting, frosty breath;
 The bees, rejoicing o'er their summer toils,
 Unnumber'd buds, an' flowers' delicious spoils,
 Seal'd up with frugal care in massive waxen piles,
 Are doom'd by man, that tyrant o'er the weak,
 The death o' devils—smoor'd⁵ wi' brimstone reek;⁶
 The thundering guns are heard on ev'ry side,
 The wounded coveys, reeling, scatter wide;
 The feather'd field-mates, bound by Nature's tie,
 Sires, mothers, children, in one carnage lie:
 (What warm poetic heart, but inly bleeds,
 And execrates man's savage, ruthless deeds!)
 Nae mair the flower in field or meadow springs;
 Nae mair the grove with airy concert rings,
 Except perhaps the robin's whistling glee,
 Proud o' the height o' some bit half-lang tree:
 The hoary morns precede the sunny days,
 Mild, calm, serene, wide spreads the noon-tide blaze,
 While thick the gossamer waves wanton in the rays.
 'Twas in that season, when a simple Bard,
 Unknown and poor, simplicity's reward;
 Ae night within the ancient burgh of Ayr,
 By whim inspired, or haply press'd wi' care;
 He left his bed, and took his wayward rout,
 And down by Simpson's⁷ wheel'd the left about:
 (Whether impell'd by all-directing Fate,
 To witness what I after shall narrate;

¹ John Ballantyne, Esq., Banker, Ayr, one of our poet's earliest patrons.—

² Covering. — ³ Thatch secured with ropes of straw, &c. — ⁴ Damage.—

⁵ Smothered.—⁶ Smoke.—⁷ A noted tavern at the Auld Brig end.

Or whether, rapt in meditation high,
 He wander'd out, he knew not where nor why :
 The drowsy Dungeon-clock had numbered two,
 And Wallace Tower¹ had sworn the fact was true ;
 The tide-swoln Firth, with sullen-sounding roar,
 Through the still night dash'd hoarse along the
 shore ;

All else was hush'd as Nature's closed e'e ;
 The silent moon shone high o'er tower and tree :
 The chilly frost, beneath the silver beam,
 Crept, gently-crusting, o'er the glittering stream.

When, lo ! on either hand the list'ning Bard,
 The clanging sugh² of whistling wings he heard ;
 Two dusky forms dart thro' the midnight air,
 Swift as the Gos³ drives on the wheeling hare ;
 Ane on th' *Auld Brig* his hairy shape uprears,
 The ither flutters o'er the *rising piers* ;
 Our warlock⁴ Rhymer instantly descried
 The Spirits that owre the *Brigs of Ayr* preside.
 (That bards are second-sighted is nae joke,
 And ken the lingo o' the sp'ritual folk ;
 Fays, spunkies, kelpies, a', they can explain them,
 And even the vera deils they brawly ken them.)
Auld Brig appear'd of ancient Pictish race,
 The vera wrinkles Gothic in his face :
 He seem'd as he wi' Time had warstled⁵ lang,
 Yet teughly doure,⁶ he bade⁷ an unco bang.⁸
New Brig was buskit⁹ in a braw new coat,
 That he, at Lon'on, frae ane Adams, got ;
 In 's hand five taper staves as smooth 's a bead,
 Wi' virls¹⁰ and whirlygigums¹¹ at the head.
 The Goth was stalking round with anxious search
 Spying the time-worn flaws in every arch ;
 It chanced his new-come neebor took his e'e,
 And e'en a vex'd and angry heart had he !
 Wi' thieveless¹² sneer to see his modish mien,
 He, down the water, gies him this guid-e'en :¹³

¹ Dungeon-clock and Wallace Tower, the two steeples.—² The continued rushing noise of wind.—³ The gos-hawk, or falcon.—⁴ Wizard.—⁵ Wrestled.—⁶ Toughly durable.—⁷ Did bide, sustain, or endure.—⁸ Sustained the repeated shocks of the floods and currents.—⁹ Dressed.—¹⁰ A ring which surrounds a column, &c.—¹¹ Useless ornaments.—¹² Cold, dry—spoken of a person's demeanor.—¹³ Salutation, or good evening.

AULD BRIG.

I doubt na', frien', ye'll think ye're nae sheep-shank,¹
 Ance ye were streekit² o'er frae bank to bank!
 But gin ye be a brig as auld as me,
 Tho' faith that day, I doubt, ye'll never see;
 There'll be, if that date come, I'll wad a bodle,³
 Some fewer whigmeleeries⁴ in your noddle.

NEW BRIG.

Auld Vandal, ye but show your little mense,⁵
 Just much about it wi' your scanty sense;
 Will your poor, narrow foot-path of a street,
 Where twa wheel-barrows tremble when they meet;
 Your ruin'd, formless bulk o' stane an' lime,
 Compare wi' bonnie brigs o' modern time?
 There's men o' taste would take the Duckat stream,⁶
 Tho' they should cast the very sark⁷ and swim,
 Ere they would grate their feelings wi' the view
 Of sic an ugly Gothic hulk as you.

AULD BRIG.

Conceited gowk!⁸ puff'd up wi' windy pride!
 This monie a year I've stood the flood an' tide;
 And tho' wi' crazy eild⁹ I'm sair forfairn,¹⁰
 I'll be a brig when ye're a shapeless cairn;¹¹
 As yet ye little ken about the matter,
 But twa-three winters will inform ye better.
 When heavy, dark, continued, a'-day rains,
 Wi' deepening deluges o'erflow the plains;
 When from the hills where springs the brawling
 Coil,
 Or stately Lugar's mossy fountains boil,
 Or where the Greenock winds his moorland course,
 Or haunted Garpal¹² draws his feeble source,

¹ No mean personage.—² Stretched.—³ Bet a bodle; i. e. a small coin.—
⁴ Whims, fancies.—⁵ Good-breeding.—⁶ A noted ford just above Auld Brig.
⁷ Shirt.—⁸ Cuckoo; applied as a term of contempt.—⁹ Old age.—¹⁰ Worn
 out.—¹¹ A loose heap of stones.

¹² The banks of Garpal Water is one of the few places in the west of Scotland, where those fancy-scaring beings, known by the name of *Ghaists*, still continue pertinaciously to inhabit.

Aroused by blustering winds an' spotting thowes,¹
 In monie a torrent down his snaw-broo rowes;²
 While crashing ice, borne on the roaring speat,³
 Sweeps dams, an' mills, an' brigs, a' to the gate;
 And from Glenbuck,⁴ down to the Ratton-key,⁵
 Auld Ayr is just one lengthen'd, tumbling sea;
 Then down ye 'll hurl—deil nor ye never rise;
 And dash the gumlie jaups⁶ up to the pouring skies:
 A lesson sadly teaching, to your cost,
 That architecture's noble art is lost.

NEW BRIG.

Fine architecture! trowth, I needs must say 't o't,
 The L—d be thankit that we 've tint the gate' o't!
 Gaunt, ghastly, ghaist-alluring edifices,
 Hanging with threatening jut, like precipices;
 O'er-arching, mouldy, gloom-inspiring coves,
 Supporting roofs fantastic, stony groves;
 Windows and doors in nameless sculpture drest,
 With order, symmetry, or taste unblest;
 Forms like some bedlam statuary's dream,
 The crazed creations of misguided whim;
 Forms might be worshipp'd on the bended knee,
 And still the *second* dread *command* be free,
 Their likeness is not found on earth, in air, or sea.
 Mansions that would disgrace the building taste
 Of any mason, reptile, bird, or beast;
 Fit only for a doited⁸ monkish race,
 Or frosty maids, forsworn the dear embrace;
 Or cuifs⁹ of latter times, wha held the notion
 That sullen gloom was sterling true devotion;
 Fancies that our guid Burgh¹⁰ denies protection,
 And soon may they expire, unblest'd with resurrection!

AULD BRIG.

O ye, my dear-remember'd ancient yealings,¹¹
 Were ye but here to share my wounded feelings!
 Ye worthy Proveses, an' monie a Bailie,
 Wha in the paths of righteousness did toil ay;

¹ Thaws.—² Snow-water rolls.—³ A sweeping torrent after a thaw.—⁴ The source of the river Ayr.—⁵ A small landing-place above the large quay.—

⁶ The muddy jerks of agitated water.—⁷ Lost the way of it.—⁸ Stupefied.—

⁹ Blockheads.—¹⁰ Borough.—¹¹ Coevals.

Ye dainty Deacons, and ye douce¹ Conveeners,
 To whom our moderns are but causey-cleaners;
 Ye godly Councils wha hae bless'd this town,
 Ye godly Brethren of the sacred gown,
 Wha meekly gae your hurdies² to the smiters;
 And (what would now be strange) ye godly Writers:
 A' ye douce folk I've borne aboon the broo,
 Were ye but here, what would you say or do?
 How would your spirits groan in deep vexation,
 To see such melancholy alteration;
 And, agonizing, curse the time and place,
 When ye begat the base, degenerate race?
 Nae langer reverend men, their country's glory,
 In plain braid³ Scots hold forth a plain braid story!
 Nae langer thrifty citizens an' douce,⁴
 Meet owre a pint, or in the council-house;
 But staumrel,⁵ corky-headed, graceless gentry,
 The herryment⁶ and ruin of the country;
 Men, three-parts made by tailors and by barbers,
 Wha waste your weel-hain'd gear⁷ on d—d new *brigs*
and harbors!

NEW BRIG.

Now haud⁸ you there! for faith ye've said enough,
 And muckle⁹ mair than ye can make to through.¹⁰
 As for your priesthood, I shall say but little,
*Corbies*¹¹ and *clergy* are a shot right kittle:¹²
 But under favor o' your langer beard,
 Abuse o' magistrates might weel be spared:
 To liken them to your auld-warld squad,
 I must needs say comparisons are odd.
 In Ayr, wag-wits nae mair can hae¹³ a handle
 To mouth a "citizen," a term o' scandal;
 Nae mair the council waddles down the street,
 In all the pomp of ignorant conceit;
 Men wha grew wise prigg¹⁴in owre hops an' raisins,
 Or gather'd liberal views in bonds and seisions.
 If haply Knowledge, on a random tramp,
 Had shor'd¹⁵ them with a glimmer of his lamp,

¹ Wise.—² The loins.—³ Broad.—⁴ Wise, prudent.—⁵ Half-witted.—⁶ Plunderers.—⁷ Well-saved money.—⁸ Hold.—⁹ Much.—¹⁰ Make out, or prove.—

¹¹ A species of crows.—¹² Ticklish, difficult to come at.—¹³ To have.—

¹⁴ Cheapening.—¹⁵ Offered.

And would to Common-sense, for once betray'd them,
Plain, dull Stupidity stept kindly in to aid them.

* * * * *

What farther clishmaclaver¹ might been said,
What bloody wars, if sprites had blood to shed,
No man can tell; but all before their sight,
A fairy train appear'd in order bright:
Adown the glitt'ring stream they featly danced;
Bright to the moon their various dresses glanced;
They footed o'er the wat'ry glass so neat,
The infant ice scarce bent beneath their feet;
While arts of minstrelsy among them rung,
And soul-ennobling bards heroic ditties sung.
O had M'Lauchlan,² thairm³-inspiring sage,
Been there to hear this heavenly band engage,
When through his dear *strathspeys* they bore with
Highland rage;
Or when they struck old Scotia's melting airs,
The lover's raptured joys or bleeding cares;
How would his Highland lug⁴ been nobler fired,
And e'en his matchless hand with finer touch inspired!
No guess could tell what instrument appear'd,
But all the soul of Music's self was heard;
Harmonious concert rung in every part,
While simple melody pour'd moving on the heart.

The Genius of the stream in front appears,
A venerable chief advanced in years;
His hoary head with water-lilies crown'd,
His manly leg with garter-tangle⁵ bound;
Next came the loveliest pair in all the ring,
Sweet Female Beauty hand in hand with Spring;
Then, crown'd with flowery hay, came Rural Joy,
And Summer, with his fervid-beaming eye;
All-cheering Plenty, with her flowing horn,
Led yellow Autumn, wreathed with nodding corn;
Then Winter's time-bleach'd locks did hoary show,
By Hospitality, with cloudless brow.
Next follow'd Courage with his martial stride,
From where the Feal⁶ wild-woody coverts hide;
Benevolence, with mild, benignant air,

¹ Idle tale.—² A well-known performer of Scottish music on the violin.—

³ Fiddle-string.—⁴ Ear.—⁵ Sea-weed.—⁶ Field, meadow.

A female form,¹ came from the towers of Stair;
 Learning and Worth in equal measures trode
 From simple Catrine,² their long-loved abode;
 Last, white-robed Peace, crown'd with a hazel wreath,
 To rustic Agriculture did bequeath
 The broken iron instruments of Death;
 At sight of whom our Sprites forgot their kindling
 wrath.

L I N E S

Written with a pencil, standing by the Fall of Fyers, near Loch-Ness.

AMONG the heathy hills and ragged woods
 The roaring Fyers pours his mossy floods;
 Till full he dashes on the rocky mounds,
 Where, thro' a shapeless breach, his stream resounds.
 As high in air the bursting torrents flow,
 As deep recoiling surges foam below.
 Prone down the rock the whitening sheet descends,
 And viewless Echo's ear, astonish'd, rends.
 Dim seen thro' rising mists and ceaseless showers,
 The hoary cavern, wide-surrounding, lowers.
 Still thro' the gap the struggling river toils,
 An' still, below, the horrid cauldron boils—

* * * * * *

L I N E S

Written with a pencil, over the chimney-piece, in the parlor of an inn
 at Kenmore, Taymouth.

ADMIRING Nature in her wildest grace,
 These northern scenes with weary feet I trace;
 O'er many a winding dale and painful steep,
 The abodes of covey'd grouse and timid sheep,
 My savage journey, curious, I pursue,
 Till famed Breadalbane opens to my view.
 The meeting cliffs each deep-sunk glen divides,
 The woods, wild-scatter'd, clothe their ample sides;
 Th' outstretching lake, embosom'd 'mong the hills,

¹ Mrs. Stewart.—² See note 1, p. 134.

The eye with wonder and amazement fills;
 The Tay meand'ring sweet in infant pride,
 The palace rising on his verdant side;
 The lawns wood-fringed in Nature's native taste;
 The hillocks dropt in Nature's careless haste;
 The arches striding o'er the new-born stream;
 The village glittering in the noon-tide beam—

* * * * *

Poetic ardors in my bosom swell,
 Lone, wandering by the hermit's mossy cell:
 The sweeping theatre of hanging woods;
 Th' incessant roar of headlong tumbling floods—

* * * * *

Here Poesy might wake her heaven-taught lyre,
 And look through Nature with creative fire;
 Here, to the wrongs of Fate half reconciled,
 Misfortune's lighten'd steps might wander wild;
 And Disappointment, in these lonely bounds,
 Find balm to sooth her bitter, rankling wounds.
 Here heart-struck Grief might heavenward stretch

her scan,

And injured Worth forget and pardon man.¹

* * * * *

INSCRIPTION FOR AN ALTAR TO INDEPENDENCE,

At Kerrourghtry, the seat of Mr. Heron, author of a *Life of the poet*, *History of Scotland*, &c., &c. ; written in the summer, 1795.

THOU of an independent mind,
 With soul resolved, with soul resign'd;
 Prepared power's proudest frown to brave,
 Who wilt not be, nor have a slave;
 Virtue alone who dost revere,
 Thy own reproach alone dost fear,—
 Approach this shrine, and worship here.

¹ These two Fragments were composed in the autumn of 1787, when the poet was on a tour to the Highlands with Mr. W. Nicol, of the High School, Edinburgh.

ON PASTORAL POETRY.

HAIL, Poesie! thou nymph reserved!
 In chase o' thee what crowds hae swerved
 Frae common sense, or sunk enerved
 'Mang heaps o' clavers;¹
 And och! o'er aft² thy joes³ hae starved,
 'Mid a' thy favors!

Say, lassie, why thy train amang,
 While loud the trump's heroic clang,
 And sock or buskin, skelp⁴ alang
 To death or marriage,
 Scarce ane has tried the shepherd-sang,
 But wi' miscarriage?

In Homer's craft Jock Milton thrives;
 Eschylus' pen Will Shakspeare drives;
 Wee⁵ Pope, the knurlin,⁶ till' him 'rives
 Horatian fame;⁸
 In thy sweet sang, Barbauld, survives
 Even Sappho's flame.

But thee, Theocritus! wha matches?
 They're no herd's ballats, Maro's catches:
 Squire Pope but busks⁹ his skinklin¹⁰ patches
 O' heathen tatters:
 I pass by hunders,¹¹ nameless wretches,
 That ape their betters.

In this braw age o' wit and lear,¹²
 Will nane the shepherd's whistle mair
 Blaw sweetly in its native air
 And rural grace;
 And wi' the far-famed Grecian, share
 A rival place?

Yes, there is ane—a Scottish callan!¹³
 There's ane—come forrit,¹⁴ honest *Allan*!¹⁵

¹ Idle stories.—² Over often.—³ Thy lovers.—⁴ Trip.—⁵ Little.—⁶ Dwarf.
 —⁷ To.—⁸ 'Rives Horatian fame; i. e. divides, or shares fame with Horace.—
⁹ Dresses.—¹⁰ A small portion.—¹¹ Hundreds.—¹² Learning.—¹³ Boy.—
¹⁴ Forward.—¹⁵ Allan Ramsay.

Thou need na jouk¹ beyond the hallan,²
 A chiel sae clever;
 The teeth o' time may gnaw *Tamtallan*,³
 But thou 's forever!

Thou paints auld Nature to the nines,
 In thy sweet *Caledonian* lines:
 Nae gowden⁴ stream thro' myrtles twines,
 Where Philomel,
 While nightly breezes sweep the vines,
 Her griefs will tell!

In gowany glens⁵ thy burnie' strays,
 Where bonnie lasses bleach their claes;⁶
 Or trots by hazelly shaws and braes,
 Wi' hawthorns gray,
 Where blackbirds join the shepherd's lays
 At close o' day.

Thy rural loves are Nature's sel';⁷
 Nae bombast spates⁸ o' nonsense swell;
 Nae snap⁹ conceits, but that sweet spell
 O' witchin' love,
 That charm, that can the strongest quell,
 The sternest move.

ON THE LATE CAPTAIN GROSE'S PEREGRINATIONS THROUGH SCOTLAND,

COLLECTING THE ANTIQUITIES OF THAT KINGDOM.

HEAR, Land o' Cakes, and brither Scots,
 Frae Maidenkirk to Johnie Groat's;
 If there's a hole in a' your coats,
 I rede you tent it:¹²
 A chield 's amang you takin' notes,
 And, faith, he'll prent it.

If in your bounds ye chance to light
 Upon a fine, fat, fodge¹³ wight,

¹ To hang the head.—² A party-wall in a cottage.—³ The name of a mountain.—⁴ Exactly, to a nicety.—⁵ Golden.—⁶ Daisied dales.—⁷ Rivulet.—⁸ Clothes.—⁹ Self.—¹⁰ Torrents.—¹¹ Short.—¹² I advise you to be cautious.—¹³ Popsy, bloated.

O' stature short, but genius bright,
 That's he, mark weel—
 And wow!¹ he has an unco slight²
 O' cauk and keel.³

By some auld houlet⁴-haunted biggin',⁵
 Or kirk deserted by its riggen,
 It's ten to ane ye'll find him snug in
 Some eldritch⁶ part,
 Wi' deils they say, L—d safe's! colleaguin'
 At some black art.—

Ilk ghaist⁷ that haunts auld ha' or cham'er,⁸
 Ye gipsey gang that deal in glamor,⁹
 And you deep-read in hell's black grammar,
 Warlocks¹⁰ an' witches;
 Ye'll quake at his conjuring hammer,
 Ye midnight b—es!

It's tauld he was a sodger¹¹ bred,
 And ane wad rather fa'n than fled;
 But now he's quat¹² the spurtle blade,¹³
 And dog-skin wallet,
 And taen the—*Antiquarian trade*,
 I think they call it.

He has a fouth¹⁴ o' auld nick-nackets:
*Rusty airn caps*¹⁵ and jingling jackets,¹⁶
 Wad haud the Lothians three in tackets,¹⁷
 A towmont guid;¹⁸
 An' *parritch-pats*,¹⁹ and auld *saut-buckets*,
 Before the flood.

Of Eve's first fire he has a cinder;
 And Tubal-Cain's fire-shool and fender;
 That which distinguishéd the gender
 O' Balaam's ass;

¹ An exclamation of pleasure, or wonder.—² Great sleight, or dexterity.—
³ Chalk and red clay.—⁴ An owl.—⁵ Building. See his *Antiquities of Scotland*.—⁶ Frightful, ghastly.—⁷ Each ghost.—⁸ Old hall, or chamber.—⁹ Fortune-telling, pretending to a knowledge of future events by magic, &c.—
¹⁰ Wizards.—¹¹ Soldier.—¹² Did quit.—¹³ A sort of nickname for a sword.—
¹⁴ A plenty.—¹⁵ Iron helmets.—¹⁶ Coats of mail, &c. See his *Treatise on Ancient Armor*.—¹⁷ Small nails.—¹⁸ Would furnish tacks enough to supply the three counties of Lothian for a twelvemonth.—¹⁹ Porridge-pots.

A broom-stick o' the Witch of Endor,
Weel shod wi' brass.

Forbye,¹ he'll shape you aff, fu' gleg,²
The cut of Adam's philibeg;³
The knife that nicket Abel's craig,⁴
He'll prove you fully
It was a faulding jocteleg,⁵
Or long-kail gullie.⁶

But wad ye see him in his glee,
(For meikle glee and fun has he,)
Then set him down, and twa or three
Guid fellows wi' him;
And *port, O port!* shine thou a wee,
And then ye'll see him!

Now, by the powers o' verse and prose!
Thou art a dainty chield,⁷ O Grose!
Whae'er o' thee shall ill suppose,
They sair misca' thee;
I'd take the rascal by the nose,
Wad say, Shame fa' thee!

VERSES WRITTEN AT SELKIRK.⁸

AULD chuckie Reekie⁹'s sair distrest,
Down droops her ance weel burnisht crest,
Nae joy her bonnie buskit¹⁰ nest
Can yield awa,¹¹
Her darling bird that she lo'es best,
Willie's awa!

O Willie was a witty wight,¹²
And had o' things an unco¹³ slight;
Auld Reekie ay he keepit tight,
And trig an' braw:¹⁴

¹ Besides.—² Quite readily.—³ The short petticoat, part of the Highland dress.—⁴ Throat.—⁵ A folding or clasp knife.—⁶ A large knife used for cutting kail.—⁷ Fellow.

⁸ To William Creech, Esq., Edinburgh, author of "Fugitive Pieces," &c., and the Poet's worthy publisher.

⁹ Edinburgh.—¹⁰ Dressed.—¹¹ At all.—¹² A superior genius.—¹³ Very great.—¹⁴ Spruce and fine.

But now they'll busk¹ her like a fright,
Willie's awa!

The stiffest o' them a' he bow'd,
The bauldest o' them a' he cow'd;²
They durst nae mair than he allow'd,
That was a law:
We've lost a birkie³ weel worth gowd,
Willie's awa!

Now gawkies, tawpies, gowks and fools,⁴
Frae colleges, and boarding-schools,
May sprout like simmer puddock-stools,⁵
In glen or shaw;⁶
He who could brush them down to mools,⁷
Willie's awa!

The brethren o' the Commerce-chaumer⁸
May mourn their loss wi' doolfu' clamor;
He was a dictionar and grammar
Amang them a';
I fear they'll now mak mony a stammer,
Willie's awa!

Nae mair we see his levee door
Philosophers and poets pour,⁹
And toothy critics by the core,
In bloody raw!
The adjutant o' a' the score,
Willie's awa!

Now worthy Gregory's Latin face,
Tytler's and Greenfield's modest grace;
M'Kenzie, Stuart, such a brace
As Rome ne'er saw;
They a' maun¹⁰ meet some ither place,
Willie's awa!

Poor Burns—e'en Scotch drink canna quicken,
He cheeps¹¹ like some bewilder'd chicken,

¹ Dress.—² Frightened.—³ Clever fellow.—⁴ Foolish, thoughtless young persons.—⁵ Mushrooms.—⁶ A small wood in a hollow.—⁷ Dust.

⁸ The Chamber of Commerce of Edinburgh, of which Mr. C. was secretary.

⁹ Many literary gentlemen were accustomed to meet at Mr. C.'s house at breakfast.

¹⁰ Must.—¹¹ Chirps.

Scared frae its minnie¹ and the clecken²
 By hoodie-craw;³
 Grief's gien⁴ his heart an unco kickin',
 Willie's awa!

Now every sour-mou'd, girnin'⁵ blemm,⁶
 And Calvin's fock⁷ are fit to fell him;
 And self-conceited critic skellum⁸
 His quill may draw;
 He wha could brawlie⁹ ward their bellum,¹⁰
 Willie's awa!

Up wimpling,¹¹ stately Tweed I've sped,
 And Eden scenes on crystal Jed,
 And Ettrick banks now roaring red,
 While tempests blaw;
 But every joy and pleasure's fled,
 Willie's awa!

May I be slander's common speech;
 A text for infamy to preach;
 And, lastly, streekit¹² out to bleach
 In winter snaw;
 When I forget thee! Willie Creech,
 Tho' far awa!

May never wicked fortune touzle him!
 May never wicked men bamboozle him!
 Until a pow¹³ as auld¹⁴'s Methusalem!
 He canty claw!¹⁵
 Then to the blessed, new Jerusalem,
 Fleet wing awa!

LIBERTY.—A FRAGMENT.

THEE, Caledonia, thy wild heaths among—
 Thee famed for martial deed and sacred song—
 To thee I turn with swimming eyes;
 Where is that soul of freedom fled?

¹ Mother.—² Brood.—³ The pewit-gull.—⁴ Given.—⁵ Grinning.—⁶ A talking fellow.—⁷ People.—⁸ A worthless fellow.—⁹ Finely.—¹⁰ Their ill-nature.—¹¹ Meandering.—¹² Stretched.—¹³ Head.—¹⁴ Old.—¹⁵ Cheerfully scratch.

Immingled with the mighty dead!
 Beneath that hallow'd turf where Wallace lies!
 Hear it not, Wallace, in thy bed of death!
 Ye babbling winds, in silence sweep;
 Disturb not ye the hero's sleep,
 Nor give the coward secret breath.—
 Is this the power in freedom's war
 That wont to bid the battle rage?
 Behold that eye which shot immortal hate,
 Crushing the despot's proudest bearing,
 That arm which, nerved with thundering fate,
 Braved usurpation's boldest daring!
 One quenched in darkness like the sinking star,
 And one the palsied arm of tottering, powerless age.

THE VOWELS.—A TALE.

'TWAS where the birch and sounding thong are plied,
 The noisy domicile of pedant pride;
 Where Ignorance her darkening vapor throws,
 And cruelty directs the thickening blows;
 Upon a time, Sir Abece the great,
 In all his pedagogic powers elate,
 His awful chair of state resolves to mount,
 And call the trembling vowels to account.
 First enter'd A, a grave, broad, solemn wight,
 But, ah! deform'd, dishonest to the sight!
 His twisted head look'd backward on his way,
 And flagrant from the scourge, he grunted, *ai!*
 Reluctant, E stalk'd in; with piteous grace
 The justling tears ran down his honest face!
 That name, that well-worn name, and all his own,
 Pale he surrenders at the tyrant's throne!
 The pedant stifles keen the Roman sound
 Not all his mongrel diphthongs can compound;
 And next the title following close behind,
 He to the nameless, ghastly wretch assign'd.
 The cobweb'd gothic dome resounded Y!
 In sullen vengeance, I, disdain'd reply:
 The pedant swung his felon cudgel round,
 And knock'd the groaning vowel to the ground!

In rueful apprehension enter'd O,
 The wailing minstrel of despairing woe;
 Th' Inquisitor of Spain the most expert,
 Might there have learnt new mysteries of his art:
 So grim, deform'd, with horrors entering U,
 His dearest friend and brother scarcely knew!

As trembling U stood staring all aghast,
 The pedant in his left hand clutch'd him fast,
 In helpless infants' tears he dipp'd his right,
 Baptized him *eu*, and kick'd him from his sight.

FRAGMENT,

Inscribed to the Right Hon. C. J. Fox.

How wisdom and folly meet, mix, and unite;
 How virtue and vice blend their black and their white;
 How genius, the illustrious father of fiction,
 Confounds rule and law, reconciles contradiction—
 I sing: If these mortals, the critics, should bustle,
 I care not, not I, let the critics go whistle.

But now for a patron, whose name and whose glory
 At once may illustrate and honor my story.

Thou first of our orators, first of our wits;
 Yet whose parts and acquirements seem mere lucky hits;
 With knowledge so vast, and with judgment so strong,
 No man with the half of 'em e'er went far wrong;
 With passions so potent, and fancies so bright,
 No man with the half of 'em e'er went quite right;
 A sorry, poor misbegot son of the Muses,
 For using thy name offers fifty excuses.

Good L—d, what is man! for as simple he looks,
 Do but try to develop his hooks and his crooks;
 With his depths and his shallows, his good and his evil,
 All in all he's a problem must puzzle the devil.

On his one ruling passion Sir Pope hugely labors,
 That, like th' old Hebrew walking-switch, eats up its
 neighbors:

Mankind are his show-box—a friend, would you know
 him?

Pull the string, ruling passion, the picture will show him.
 What pity, in rearing so beauteous a system,

One trifling particular, truth, should have miss'd him ;
 For, spite of his fine, theoretic positions,
 Mankind is a science defies definitions.

Some sort all our qualities each to its tribe,
 And think human nature they truly describe ;
 Have you found this, or t'other ? there's more in the
 wind,

As by one drunken fellow his comrades you'll find.
 But such is the flaw, or the depth of the plan,
 In the make of that wonderful creature call'd Man,
 No two virtues, whatever relation they claim,
 Nor even two different shades of the same,
 Though, like as was ever twin brother to brother,
 Possessing the one shall imply you've the other.

S K E T C H.¹

A LITTLE, upright, pert, tart, tripping wight,
 And still his precious self his dear delight ;
 Who loves his own smart shadow in the streets,
 Better than e'er the fairest she he meets :
 A man of fashion too, he made his tour,
 Léarn'd *vive la bagatelle, et vive l'amour* ;
 So travell'd monkeys their grimace improve,
 Polish they grin, nay, sigh for ladies' love.
 Much specious lore but little understood ;
 Veneering oft outshines the solid wood ;
 His solid sense—by inches you must tell,
 But mete his cunning by the old Scots ell ;
 His meddling vanity, a busy fiend,
 Still making work his selfish craft must mend.

¹ This sketch seems to be one of a series, intended for a projected work, under the title of "The Poet's Progress." This character was sent as a specimen, accompanied by a letter, to Professor Dugald Stewart, in which it is thus noticed: "The fragment beginning 'A little, upright, pert, tart,' &c., I have not shown to any man living, till I now show it to you. It forms the postulata, the axioms, the definition of a character, which, if it appear at all, shall be placed in a variety of lights. This particular part I send you merely as a sample of my hand at portrait sketching."

SCOTS PROLOGUE.

For Mr. Sutherland's Benefit Night, Dumfries.

WHAT needs this din about the town o' Lon'on,
 How this new play an' that new sang is comin' ?
 Why is outlandish stuff sae mickle courted ?
 Does nonsense mend like whisky, when imported ?
 Is there nae poet, burning keen for fame,
 Will try to gie us sangs and plays at hame ?
 For comedy abroad he need na toil,
 A fool and knave are plants of every soil ;
 Nor need he hunt as far as Rome and Greece,
 To gather matter for a serious piece ;
 There 's themes enough in Caledonian story,
 Would show the tragic muse in a' her glory.—
 Is there no daring bard will rise, and tell
 How glorious Wallace stood, how hapless fell ?
 Where are the muses fled that could produce
 A drama worthy o' the name o' Bruce ;
 How here, even here, he first unsheath'd the sword
 'Gainst mighty England and her guilty lord ;
 And after mony a bloody, deathless doing,
 Wrench'd his dear country from the jaws of ruin ?
 O for a Shakspeare or an Otway scene,
 To draw the lovely, hapless Scottish queen !
 Vain all th' omnipotence of female charms
 'Gainst headlong, ruthless, mad Rebellion's arms.
 She fell, but fell with spirit truly Roman,
 To glut the vengeance of a rival woman :
 A woman, tho' the phrase may seem uncivil,
 As able and as cruel as the devil !
 One Douglas lives in Home's immortal page,
 But Douglasses were heroes every age :
 And though your fathers, prodigal of life,
 A Douglas follow'd to the martial strife,
 Perhaps if bowls row right, and Right succeeds,
 Ye yet may follow where a Douglas leads !
 As ye hae generous done, if a' the land,
 Would take the muses' servants by the hand ;
 Not only hear, but patronize, befriend them,
 And where ye justly can commend, commend them ;

And aiblins¹ when they winna stand the test,
 Wink hard and say, the folks hae done their best;
 Would a' the land do this, then I'll be caution²
 Ye'll soon hae poets o' the Scottish nation,
 Will gar³ Fame blaw until her trumpet crack,
 An' warsle⁴ Time an' lay him on his back!

For us and for our stage should ony spier,⁵
 "Whase aught thae chieels⁶ maks a' this bustle here?"
 My best leg foremost, I'll set up my brow,
 We have the honor to belong to you!
 We're your ain bairns, e'en guide us as ye like,
 But like good mithers, shore⁷ before you strike,—
 An' gratefu' still I hope ye'll ever find us,
 For a' the patronage and meikle kindness
 We've got frae a' professions, sets and ranks:
 God help us! we're but poor—ye'se get but thanks.

PROLOGUE,

Spoken at the Theatre, Dumfries, on New-Year-Day evening.

No song nor dance I bring from yon great city
 That queens it o'er our taste—the more's the pity:
 Tho', by the by, abroad why will you roam?
 Good sense and taste are natives here at home:
 But not for panegyric I appear,
 I come to wish you all a good new-year!
 Old Father Time deposes me here before ye,
 Not for to preach, but tell his simple story.
 The sage grave ancient cough'd, and bade me say,
 "You're one year older this important day:"
 If *wiser too*—he hinted some suggestion,
 But 'twould be rude, you know, to ask the question;
 And with a would-be-roguish leer and wink,
 He bade me on you press this one word—"think!"

Ye sprightly youths, quite flush with hope and
 spirit,
 Who think to storm the world by dint of merit,
 To you the dotard has a deal to say,

¹ Perhaps.—² Security.—³ Make.—⁴ To struggle.—⁵ Inquire.—⁶ Fellows.—
⁷ To chide.

In his sly, dry, sententious, proverb way!
 He bids you mind, amid your thoughtless rattle,
 That the first blow is ever half the battle;
 That tho' some by the skirt may try to snatch him,
 Yet by the forelock is the hold to catch him;
 That whether doing, suffering, or forbearing,
 You may do miracles by persevering.

Last, tho' not least in love, ye youthful fair,
 Angelic forms, high Heaven's peculiar care!
 To you old Bald-pate smooths his wrinkled brow,
 And humbly begs you 'll mind th' important—now!
 To crown your happiness he asks your leave,
 And offers, bliss to give and to receive.

For our sincere, tho' haply weak endeavors,
 With grateful pride we own your many favors;
 And howsoe'er our tongues may ill reveal it,
 Believe our glowing bosoms truly feel it.

PROLOGUE,

Spoken by Mr. Woods, on his Benefit Night, Monday, April 16, 1787.

WHEN by a generous public's kind acclaim,
 That dearest meed is granted—honest fame;
 When here your favor is the actor's lot,
 Nor even the man in private life forgot;
 What breast so dead to heavenly virtue's glow,
 But heaves impassion'd with the grateful throe?

Poor is the task to please a barbarous throng,
 It needs no Siddons' power in Southern's song:
 But here an ancient nation, famed afar
 For genius, learning high, as great in war—
 Hail, Caledonia! name forever dear!
 Before whose sons I'm honor'd to appear!
 Where every science, every nobler art—
 That can inform the mind, or mend the heart,
 Is known; as grateful nations oft have found,
 Far as the rude barbarian marks the bound.
 Philosophy, no idle, pedant dream,
 Here holds her search, by heaven-taught Reason's
 beam;
 Here History paints, with elegance and force,

The tide of Empire's fluctuating course;
 Here Douglas forms wild Shakspeare into plan,
 And Harley¹ rouses all the god in man.
 When well-form'd taste, and sparkling wit unite,
 With manly lore, or female beauty bright,
 (Beauty, where faultless symmetry and grace
 Can only charm us in the second place,)
 Witness my heart, how oft with panting fear,
 As on this night, I've met these judges here!
 But still the hope Experience taught to live,
 Equal to judge—you're candid to forgive.
 No hundred-headed Riot here we meet,
 With decency and law beneath his feet,
 Nor Insolence assumes fair Freedom's name;
 Like Caledonians, you applaud or blame.
 O Thou, dread Power! whose empire-giving hand
 Has oft been stretch'd to shield the honor'd land,
 Strong may she glow with all her ancient fire;
 May every son be worthy of his sire;
 Firm may she rise with generous disdain
 At Tyranny's, or direr Pleasure's chain;
 Still self-dependent in her native shore,
 Bold may she brave grim Danger's loudest roar,
 Till Fate the curtain drop on worlds to be no more.

 TRAGIC FRAGMENT.

[The following verses were written when our Poet was in his eighteenth or nineteenth year. It is an exclamation by a great character on meeting with a child of misery.]

ALL devil as I am, a damnéd wretch,
 A harden'd, stubborn, unrepenting villain,
 Still my heart melts at human wretchedness;
 And with sincere tho' unavailing sighs,
 I view the helpless children of distress.
 With tears indignant I behold th' oppressor
 Rejoicing in the honest man's destruction,
 Whose unsubmitting heart was all his crime.
 Even you, ye helpless crew, I pity you;

¹ The Man of Feeling, written by Mr. Mackenzie.

Ye, whom the seeming good think sin to pity :
Ye poor despised, abandon'd vagabonds,
Whom vice, as usual, has turn'd o'er to ruin.
—O, but for kind, tho' ill-requited friends,
I had been driven forth like you forlorn,
The most detested, worthless wretch among you.

REMORSE.—A FRAGMENT.

[These lines were found in a note-book of the Poet's, written in
early life.]

Of all the numerous ills that hurt our peace,
That press the soul, or wring the mind with anguish,
Beyond comparison, the worst are those
That to our folly or our guilt we owe.
In every other circumstance, the mind
Has this to say—"It was no deed of mine;"
But when to all the evil of misfortune
This sting is added—"Blame thy foolish self,"
Or, worsen far, the pangs of keen remorse;
The torturing, gnawing consciousness of guilt—
Of guilt, perhaps, where we've involved others;
The young, the innocent, who fondly loved us,
Nay more, that very love their cause of ruin!
O burning hell! in all thy store of torments,
There's not a keener lash!
Lives there a man so firm, who, while his heart
Feels all the bitter horrors of his crime,
Can reason down its agonizing throbs;
And after proper purpose of amendment,
Can firmly force his jarring thoughts to peace?
O happy, happy, enviable man!
O glorious magnanimity of soul!

O D E

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF PRINCE CHARLES EDWARD.

[Burns having been present at a meeting held at Edinburgh, on the 31st Dec., 1787, to celebrate the birth-day of the unfortunate Prince Charles Edward, and being appointed poet-laureate for the occasion, he produced an ode, of which an extract is here presented to the reader.]

* * * * *

False flatterer, Hope, away!
 Nor think to lure us as in days of yore;
 We solemnize this sorrowing natal day,
 To prove our loyal truth—we can no more;
 And, owning Heaven's mysterious sway,
 Submissive, low, adore.
 Ye honor'd, mighty dead!
 Who nobly perish'd in the glorious cause,
 Your king, your country, and her laws!
 From great Dundee, who smiling victory led,
 And fell a martyr in her arms,
 (What breast of northern ice but warms?)
 To bold Balmerino's undying name,
 Whose soul of fire lighted at Heaven's high flame,
 Deserves the proudest wreath departed heroes claim.
 Not unrevenged your fate shall be,
 It only lags the fatal hour;
 Your blood shall with incessant cry
 Awake at last th' unsparing power.
 As from the cliff, with thundering course,
 The snowy ruin smokes along
 With doubling speed and gathering force,
 Till deep it crashing whelms the cottage in the vale:
 So vengeance * * , * *

ADDRESS,

spoken by Miss Fontenelle, on her Benefit Night, Dec. 4, 1795, at the Theatre,
 Dumfries.

STILL anxious to secure your partial favor,
 And not less anxious, sure, this night than ever,
 A Prologue, Epilogue, or some such matter,
 'Twould vamp my bill, said I, if nothing better:

So, sought a Poet, roosted near the skies;
 Told him I came to feast my curious eyes;
 Said, nothing like his works was ever printed:
 And last my Prologue-business silyly hinted.
 "Ma'am, let me tell you," quoth my man of rhymes,
 "I know your bent—these are no laughing times:
 Can you—but Miss, I own I have my fears,—
 Dissolve in pause—and sentimental tears,
 With laden sighs, and solemn-rounded sentence,
 Rouse from his sluggish slumbers fell Repentance;
 Paint Vengeance as he takes his horrid stand,
 Waving on high the desolating brand,
 Calling the storms to bear him o'er a guilty land?"
 I could no more—askance the creature eyeing,
 D'ye think, said I, this face was made for crying?
 I'll laugh, that's poz—nay more, the world shall
 know it;

And so, your servant! gloomy Master Poet!

Firm as my creed, sirs, 'tis my fixed belief,
 That Misery's another word for Grief;
 I also think—so may I be a bride!

That so much laughter, so much life enjoy'd.

Thou man of crazy care and ceaseless sigh,
 Still under bleak Misfortune's blasting eye;
 Doom'd to that sorest task of man alive—
 To make three guineas do the work of five:
 Laugh in Misfortune's face—the beldam witch!
 Say, you'll be merry, tho' you can't be rich.

Thou other man of care, the wretch in love,
 Who long with jiltish arts and airs hast strove;
 Who, as the boughs all temptingly project,
 Measur'st in desperate thought—a rope—thy neck—
 Or, where the beetling cliff o'erhangs the deep,
 Peerest to meditate the healing leap;
 Wouldst thou be cured, thou silly, moping elf,
 Laugh at her follies—laugh e'en at thyself;
 Learn to despise those frowns now so terrific,
 And love a kinder—that's your grand specific.

To sum up all, be merry, I advise;
 And as we're merry may we still be wise.

THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN:

An Occasional Address spoken by Miss Fontenelle on her Benefit Night.

WHILE Europe's eye is fix'd on mighty things,
The fate of empires and the fall of kings;
While quacks of state must each produce his plan,
And even children lisp *the Rights of Man*;
Amid this mighty fuss just let me mention,
The Rights of Woman merit some attention. *truce*

First, in the sexes' intermix'd connection,
One sacred Right of Woman is *protection*—
The tender flower that lifts its head elate,
Helpless must fall before the blasts of fate,
Sunk on the earth, defaced its lovely form,
Unless your shelter ward the impending storm.

Our second Right—but needless here is caution,
To keep that right inviolate's the fashion,
Each man of sense has it so full before him,
He'd die before he'd wrong it—'tis *decorum*.—
There was, indeed, in far less polish'd days,
A time when rough, rude man had naughty ways;
Would swagger, swear, get drunk, kick up a riot,
Nay, even thus invade a lady's quiet:
Now, thank our stars! these Gothic times are fled,
Now, well-bred men—and you are all well-bred—
Most justly think (and we are much the gainers)
Such conduct neither spirit, wit, nor manners.

For Right the third, our last, our best, our dearest,—
That right to fluttering female hearts the nearest,
Which even the Rights of Kings in low prostration
Most humbly own—'tis dear, dear *admiration*!
In that blest sphere alone we live and move;
There taste that life of life—immortal love.—
Smiles, glances, sighs, tears, fits, flirtations, airs,
'Gainst such an host what flinty savage dares—
When awful Beauty joins with all her charms,
Who is so rash as rise in rebel arms?

But truce with kings, and truce with constitutions,
With bloody armaments and revolutions;
Let Majesty your first attention summon,
Ah! ça ira! the Majesty of Woman!

VERSES

Written under the portrait of Fergusson, the poet, in a copy of the Author's works presented to a young lady in Edinburgh, March 19, 1787.

CURSE on ungrateful man, that can be pleased,
And yet can starve the author of the pleasure!
O thou, my elder brother in misfortune,
By far my elder brother in the muses,
With tears I pity thy unhappy fate!
Why is the bard unpitied by the world,
Yet has so keen a relish of its pleasures?

THE HENPECKED HUSBAND.

CURSED be the man, the poorest wretch in life,
The crouching vassal to the tyrant wife!
Who has no will but by her high permission;
Who has not sixpence but in her possession;
Who must to her his dear friend's secret tell,
Who dreads a curtain lecture worse than hell.—
Were such the wife had fallen to my part,
I'd break her spirit, or I'd break her heart:
I'd charm her with the magic of a switch,
I'd kiss her maids and kick the perverse b—h.

LINES ON AN INTERVIEW WITH LORD DAER.

THIS wot ye all whom it concerns,
I, Rhymer Robin, alias Burns,
October twenty-third,
A ne'er-to-be-forgotten day,
Sae far I sprachled¹ up the brae,²
I dinner'd wi' a Lord.

I've been at drunken writers' feasts,
Nay, been bitch-fou 'mang godly priests,
(Wi' reverence be it spoken;)

¹ Crawled, or clambered on the hands and knees.—² Hill.

I've even join'd the honor'd jorum,
 When mighty Squireships of the quorum
 Their hydra drouth¹ did sloken.²

But wi' a Lord—stand out my shin,
 A Lord—a Peer—an Earl's son,
 Up higher yet, my bonnet ;
 An' sic a Lord—lang Scotch ells twa,³
 Our Peerage, he o'erlooks them a'
 As I look o'er my sonnet !

But oh for Hogarth's magic power !
 To show Sir Bardie's willart⁴ glower,
 And how he stared and stammer'd,
 When goavan⁵ as if led wi' branks,⁶
 An' stumpin' on his ploughman shanks,
 He in the parlor hammer'd.

To meet good Stuart little pain is,
 Or Scotia's sacred Demosthenes,
 Thinks I, they are but men !
 But Burns, my Lord—Guid God ! I doited,⁷
 My knees on ane anither knoited,⁸
 As faltering I gaed ben !⁹

I sidling shelter'd in a nook,
 An' at his Lordship steal't a look
 Like some portentous omen ;
 Except good sense and social glee,
 An' (what surprised me) modesty,
 I markéd naught uncommon.

I watch'd the symptoms of the great,
 The gentle pride, the lordly state,
 The arrogant assuming ;
 The fient a pride, nae pride had he,
 Nor sauce, nor state that I could see,
 Mair than an honest ploughman.

¹ Thirst.—² Slacken, or quench.—³ i. e. he was six feet high.—⁴ Bashful look.—⁵ Going, or walking.—⁶ A kind of wooden curb for horses.—⁷ Was stupefied.—⁸ Knocked together.—⁹ Went into the parlor.

Then from his Lordship I shall learn,
 Henceforth to meet with unconcern
 One rank as weel's another;
 Nae honest, worthy man need care,
 To meet with noble, youthful Daer,
 For he but meets a brother.

A PRAYER.

Left in a room of a reverend friend's¹ house, where the Author slept.

O THOU, dread Power who reign'st above!
 I know thou wilt me hear;
 When for this scene of peace and love,
 I make my prayer sincere.

The hoary sire—the mortal stroke,
 Long, long, be pleased to spare!
 To bless his little filial flock,
 And show what good men are.

She, who her lovely offspring eyes
 With tender hopes and fears,
 Oh bless her with a mother's joys,
 But spare a mother's tears!

Their hope, their stay, their darling youth,
 In manhood's dawning blush;

¹ Dr. Laurie, minister of Loudoun, from whom the poet received many essential favors, one of which, and none of the least, will be best explained in his own words:—"I had taken the last farewell of my few friends—my chest was on the road to Greenock, from whence I was to embark in a few days for America. I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia, 'The gloomy night is gathering fast,' when a letter from Dr. Blacklock, to a friend of mine (Dr. Laurie, who had sent to Dr. Blacklock a copy of our Poet's works), overthrew all my schemes, by opening new prospects to my poetic ambition. The doctor belonged to a set of critics for whose applause I had not dared to hope. His opinion that I would meet with encouragement in Edinburgh for a second edition, fired me so much, that away I posted for that city, without a single acquaintance, or a single letter of introduction. The baneful star that had so long shed its blasting influence in my zenith, for once made a revolution to the nadir; and a kind Providence placed me under the patronage of one of the noblest of men, the Earl of Glencairn."

Bless him, thou God of love and truth,
 Up to a parent's wish!
 The beauteous seraph sister-band,
 With earnest tears I pray,
 Thou know'st the snares on every hand,
 Guide thou their steps away!
 When soon or late they reach that coast,
 O'er life's rough ocean driven,
 May they rejoice, no wanderer lost,
 A family in heaven!

A PRAYER,

UNDER THE PRESSURE OF VIOLENT ANGUISH.

O THOU, great Being! what thou art
 Surpasses me to know;
 Yet sure I am, that known to Thee
 Are all thy works below.
 Thy creature here before Thee stands,
 All wretched and distressed;
 Yet sure those ills that wring my soul
 Obey thy high behest.
 Sure Thou, Almighty, canst not act
 From cruelty or wrath!
 Oh, free my weary eyes from tears!
 Or close them fast in death!
 But if I must afflicted be,
 To suit some wise design;
 Then man my soul with firm resolves
 To bear and not repine!

A PRAYER,

IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH.

O THOU, unknown, Almighty cause
 Of all my hope and fear!
 In whose dread presence, ere an hour
 Perhaps I must appear!

If I have wander'd in those paths
 Of life I ought to shun;
 As *something*, loudly, in my breast
 Remonstrates I have done:

Thou know'st that Thou hast form'd me
 With passions wild and strong;
 And listening to their witching voice
 Has often led me wrong.

Where human weakness has come short,
 Or frailty stept aside,
 Do Thou, All-Good! for such Thou art,
 In shades of darkness hide.

Where with intention I have err'd,
 No other plea I have,
 But, Thou art good; and goodness still
 Delighteth to forgive.

STANZAS ON THE SAME OCCASION.

WHY am I loth to leave this earthly scene?
 Have I so found it full of pleasing charms?
 Some drops of joy with draughts of ill between;
 Some gleams of sunshine 'mid renewing storms.
 Is it departing pangs my soul alarms;
 Or death's unlovely, dreary, dark abode?
 For guilt, for guilt, my terrors are in arms;
 I tremble to approach an angry God,
 And justly smart beneath his sin-avenging rod.

Fain would I say, Forgive my foul offence!
 Fain promise never more to disobey;
 But should my Author health again dispense,
 Again I might desert fair virtue's way;
 Again in folly's path might go astray;
 Again exalt the brute and sink the man;
 Then how should I for heavenly mercy pray,
 Who act so counter heavenly mercy's plan?
 Who sin so oft have mourn'd, yet to temptation ran?

O Thou, great Governor of all below !
 If I may dare a lifted eye to Thee,
 Thy nod can make the tempest cease to blow,
 Or still the tumult of the raging sea ;
 With that controlling power assist even me,
 Those headlong furious passions to confine,
 For all unfit I feel my powers to be,
 To rule their torrent in th' allowed line ;
 Oh, aid me with thy help, Omnipotence Divine !

THE FIRST PSALM.

THE man in life, wherever placed,
 Hath happiness in store,
 Who walks not in the wicked's way,
 Nor learns their guilty lore !
 Nor from the seat of scornful pride
 Casts forth his eyes abroad,
 But with humility and awe
 Still walks before his God.
 That man shall flourish like the trees
 Which by the streamlets grow ;
 The fruitful top is spread on high,
 And firm the root below.
 But he whose blossom buds in guilt,
 Shall to the ground be cast,
 And, like the rootless stubble, tost
 Before the sweeping blast.
 For why ? That God, the good adore,
 Hath given them peace and rest,
 But hath decreed that wicked men
 Shall ne'er be truly blest.

THE FIRST SIX VERSES OF THE 90TH PSALM.

O THOU, the first, the greatest Friend
 Of all the human race !
 Whose strong right hand has ever been
 Their stay and dwelling-place !

Before the mountains heaved their heads
Beneath thy forming hand,
Before this ponderous globe itself
Arose at thy command :

That Power which raised and still upholds
This universal frame,
From countless, unbeginning time
Was ever still the same.

Those mighty periods of years
Which seem to us so vast,
Appear no more before thy sight
Than yesterday that 's past.

Thou giv'st the word : thy creature, man,
Is to existence brought :
Again, thou sayest, " Ye sons of men,
Return ye into naught !"

Thou layest them, with all their cares,
In everlasting sleep :
As with a flood thou tak'st them off
With overwhelming sweep.

They flourish like the morning flower,
In beauty's pride array'd ;
But long ere night cut down it lies
All wither'd and decay'd.

A GRACE BEFORE DINNER.

O THOU, who kindly dost provide
For every creature's want !
We bless thee, God of Nature wide,
For all thy goodness lent :
And, if it please thee, heavenly Guide,
May never worse be sent ;
But whether granted or denied,
Lord, bless us with content.—*Amen.*

VERSE

Written in Friar's-Carse Hermitage on Nith-side.

THOU whom chance may hither lead,
Be thou clad in russet weed,
Be thou deck'd in silken stole,
Grave these counsels on thy soul!—

Life is but a day at most,
Sprung from night, in darkness lost;
Hope not sunshine every hour,
Fear not clouds will always lower.

As youth and love with sprightly dance,
Beneath thy morning-star advance,
Pleasure, with her syren air,
May delude the thoughtless pair;
Let prudence bless enjoyment's cup,
Then raptured sip, and sip it up.

As thy day grows warm and high,
Life's meridian flaming nigh,
Dost thou spurn the humble vale?
Life's proud summits wouldst thou scale?
Check thy climbing step, elate.
Evils lurk in felon wait;
Dangers, eagle-pinion'd, bold
Soar around each clifty hold;
While cheerful peace, with linnets song,
Chants the lowly dells among.¹

As the shades of evening close,
Beckoning thee to long repose;
As life itself becomes disease,
Seek the chimney-neuk of ease;
There, ruminate with sober thought,
On all thou 'st seen, and heard, and wrought;
And teach the sportive youngers round,
Saws of experience, sage and sound.
Say, "Man's true, genuine estimate,
The grand criterion of his fate,
Is not, Art thou high or low?
Did thy fortune ebb or flow?
Did many talents gild thy span?"

¹ See "Grongar Hill," a Poem by Dyer.

Or frugal nature grudge thee one?"
 Tell them, and press it on their mind,
 As thou thyself must shortly find,
 The smile or frown of awful Heaven
 To virtue or to vice is given.
 Say, "To be just, and kind, and wise,
 There solid self-enjoyment lies;
 That foolish, selfish, faithless ways
 Lead to the wretched, vile, and base."

Thus resign'd and quiet creep
 To the bed of lasting sleep;
 Sleep, whence thou shalt ne'er awake,
 Night, where dawn shall never break,
 Till future life—future no more,
 To light, and joy, and good restore—
 To light and joy unknown before!
 Stranger, go! Heaven be thy guide!
 Quoth the Beadsman of Nith-side.

WINTER.—A DIRGE.

THE wintry west extends his blast,
 And hail and rain does blaw;
 Or the stormy north sends driving forth
 The blinding sleet and snaw:
 While tumbling brown, the burn comes down,
 And roars frae bank to brae;
 And bird and beast in covert rest
 And pass the heartless day.

"The sweeping blast, the sky o'erblast,"¹
 The joyless winter-day,
 Let others fear, to me more dear
 Than all the pride of May:
 The tempest's howl, it soothes my soul,
 My griefs it seems to join;
 The leafless trees my fancy please,
 Their fate resembles mine!

Thou Power Supreme, whose mighty scheme
 These woes of mine fulfil,

¹ Dr. Young.

Here, firm, I rest—they must be best,
Because they are Thy will!
Then all I want (oh, do thou grant
This one request of mine!)
Since to enjoy thou dost deny,
Assist me to resign.

MAN WAS MADE TO MOURN.—A DIRGE.

WHEN chill November's surly blast
Made fields and forests bare,
One evening, as I wander'd forth
Along the banks of Ayr,
I spied a man, whose aged step
Seem'd weary, worn with care;
His face was furrow'd o'er with years,
And hoary was his hair.

"Young stranger, whither wand'rest thou?"
Began the reverend sage;
"Does thirst of wealth thy step constrain,
Or youthful pleasure's rage?
Or, haply, prest with cares and woes,
Too soon thou hast began
To wander forth with me to mourn
The miseries of man!"

"The sun that overhangs yon moors,
Outspreading far and wide,
Where hundreds labor to support
A haughty lordling's pride!
I've seen yon weary winter-sun
Twice forty times return;
And every time has added proofs
That man was made to mourn.

"O man! while in thy early years,
How prodigal of time!
Misspending all thy precious hours,
Thy glorious youthful prime!
Alternate follies take the sway;
Licentious passions burn;

Which tenfold force gives Nature's law,
That man was made to mourn.

"Look not alone on youthful prime,
Or manhood's active might;
Man then is useful to his kind,
Supported is his right;
But see him on the edge of life,
With cares and sorrows worn,
Then age and want, oh! ill-match'd pair!
Show man was made to mourn.

"A few seem favorites of Fate,
In pleasure's lap carest;
Yet, think not all the rich and great
Are likewise truly blest.
But, oh! what crowds in every land,
Are wretched and forlorn!
Thro' weary life this lesson learn,
That man was made to mourn.

"Many and sharp the numerous ills
Inwoven with our frame!
More pointed still we make ourselves,
Regret, remorse, and shame!
And man, whose heaven-erected face
The smiles of love adorn,
Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn!

"See yonder poor, o'erlabor'd wight,
So abject, mean, and vile,
Who begs a brother of the earth
To give him leave to toil;¹
And see his lordly *fellow-worm*
The poor petition spurn,
Unmindful, though a weeping wife
And helpless offspring mourn.

"If I'm design'd yon lordling's slave—
By Nature's law design'd—

¹ The contrast between his own worldly circumstances and intellectual rank, was never perhaps more bitterly nor more loftily expressed by our Poet, than in these four lines, and the first half of the following stanza.

Why was an independent wish
 E'er planted in my mind?
 If not, why am I subject to
 His cruelty or scorn?
 Or why has man the will and power
 To make his fellow mourn?

"Yet let not this too much, my son,
 Disturb thy youthful breast:
 This partial view of human kind
 Is surely not the *last*!
 The poor, oppress'd, honest man
 Had never, sure, been born,
 Had there not been some recompense
 To comfort those that mourn!

"O Death! the poor man's dearest friend!
 The kindest and the best!
 Welcome the hour my ag'd limbs
 Are laid with thee at rest!
 The great, the wealthy, fear thy blow,
 From pomp and pleasure torn;
 But, oh! a blest relief to those
 That weary-laden mourn!"¹

DESPONDENCY.—AN ODE.

OPPRESS'D with grief, oppress'd with care,
 A burden more than I can bear,
 I sit me down and sigh:
 O Life! thou art a galling load,
 Along a rough, a weary road,
 To wretches such as I!
 Dim, backward, as I cast my view,
 What sickening scenes appear!
 What sorrows *yet* may pierce me thro',
 Too justly I may fear!
 Still caring, despairing,
 Must be my bitter doom;

¹ In "Man was made to Mourn," Burns appears to have taken many hints from an ancient ballad, entitled "The Life and Age of Man."

My woes here shall close ne'er,
But with the closing tomb!

Happy, ye sons of busy life,
Who, equal to the bustling strife,
No other view regard!
Even when the wishéd *end*'s denied,
Yet while the busy *means* are plied,
They bring their own reward:
Whilst I, a hope-abandon'd wight,
Unfitted with an *aim*,
Meet every sad returning night,
And joyless morn, the same.
You, bustling, and justling,
Forget each grief and pain;
I listless, yet restless,
Find every prospect vain.

How blest the Solitary's lot!
Who, all-forgetting, all-forgot,
Within his humble cell,
The cavern wild, with tangling roots,
Sits o'er his newly-gather'd fruits,
Beside his crystal well!
Or, haply, to his evening thought,
By unfrequented stream,
The ways of men are distant brought,
A faint collected dream:
While praising, and raising
His thoughts to Heaven on high,
As wandering, meandering,
He views the solemn sky.

Than I, no lonely hermit placed
Where never human footstep traced,
Less fit to play the part;
The lucky moment to improve,
And *just* to stop and *just* to move,
With self-respecting art:
But ah! those pleasures, loves, and joys,
Which I too keenly taste,
The *Solitary* can despise,
Can want, and yet be blest!
He needs not, he heeds not,

Or human love or hate,
 Whilst I here must cry here,
 At perfidy ingrate!

Oh! enviable, early days,
 When dancing thoughtless pleasure's maze,
 To care, to guilt unknown!
 How ill exchanged for riper times,
 To feel the follies, or the crimes,
 Of others, or my own!
 Ye tiny elves that guiltless sport,
 Like linnets in the bush,
 Ye little know the ills ye court,
 When manhood is your wish!
 The losses, the crosses,
 That *active man* engage!
 The fears all, the tears all,
 Of dim declining *age*!

TO RUIN.

ALL hail! inexorable lord!
 At whose destruction-breathing word
 The mightiest empires fall!
 Thy cruel, woe-delighted train,
 The ministers of grief and pain,
 A sullen welcome, all!
 With stern-resolved despairing eye,
 I see each aimed dart;
 For one has cut my *dearest tie*,
 And quivers in my heart.
 Then lowering and pouring,
 The *storm* no more I dread;
 Tho' thickening and blackening,
 Round my devoted head.

And thou, grim Power, by life abhorr'd,
 While life a *pleasure* can afford,
 Oh! hear a wretch's prayer!
 No more I shrink, appall'd, afraid,
 I court, I beg thy friendly aid,
 To close this scene of care!

When shall my soul, in silent peace,
 Resign life's *joyless* day;
 My weary heart its throbbing cease,
 Cold mouldering in the clay?
 No fear more, no tear more,
 To stain my lifeless face;
 Enclasped and grasped
 Within thy cold embrace!

A WINTER NIGHT.

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
 That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm!
 How shall your houseless heads, and unfed sides,
 Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
 From seasons such as these!—*Shakspeare.*

WHEN biting Boreas, fell and dour,¹
 Sharp shivers thro' the leafless bower;
 When Phœbus gies a short-lived glower²
 Far south the lift,³
 Dim darkening thro' the flaky shower
 Or whirlin' drift:

Ae⁴ night the storm the steeples rock'd,
 Poor labor sweet in sleep was lock'd,
 While burns,⁵ in snawy wreaths up-chock'd,
 Wild-eddying swirl,⁶
 Or thro' the mining outlet bock'd,⁷
 Down headlong hurl.

Listening the doors and winnocks⁸ rattle,
 I thought me on the ourie⁹ cattle,
 Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle
 O' winter war,
 And thro' the drift, deep-lairing¹⁰ sprattle
 Beneath a scar.¹¹

Ilk happing¹² bird, wee, helpless thing,
 That, in the merry months o' spring,
 Delighted me to hear thee sing,

¹ Sullen.—² Glimmer.—³ The sky.—⁴ One.—⁵ Rivulets.—⁶ Curve.—
⁷ Gushed.—⁸ Windows.—⁹ Shivering.—¹⁰ Wading and sinking in snow, or
 mud.—¹¹ A cliff, or precipice.—¹² Each hopping.



Regardless of her tears, and unavailing prayers!
Perhaps this hour in misery's squallid nest,
She strains her infant to her joyless breast,
And with a mother's tears, shakes at the rocking blast!

What comes o' thee?
 Whare wilt thou cower thy chittering wing,
 And close thy e'e?

E'en you cn murdering errands toil'd,
 Lone, from your savage homes exiled,
 The blood-stain'd roost, and sheep-cote spoil'd,
 My heart forgets,
 While pitiless the tempest wild
 Sore on you beats.

Now Phœbe, in her midnight reign,
 Dark, muffled, view'd the dreary plain;
 Still crowding thoughts a pensive train,
 Rose in my soul,
 When on my ear this plaintive strain,
 Slow, solemn, stole—

“Blow, blow, ye winds, with heavier gust!
 And freeze, thou bitter-biting frost!
 Descend, ye chilly, smothering snows!
 Not all your rage, as now united, shows
 More hard unkindness, unrelenting,
 Vengeful malice, unrepenting,
 Than heaven-illumin'd man on brother man bestows.

“See stern oppression's iron grip,
 Or mad ambition's gory hand,
 Sending, like bloodhounds from the slip,
 Woe, want, and murder o'er a land!

“E'en in the peaceful rural vale,
 Truth, weeping, tells the mournful tale,
 How pamper'd Luxury, Flattery by her side,
 The parasite empoisoning her ear,
 With all the servile wretches in the rear,
 Looks o'er proud property, extended wide;
 And eyes the simple rustic hind,
 Whose toil upholds the glittering show,
 A creature of another kind,
 Some coarser substance, unrefined,
 Placed for her lordly use thus far, thus vile, below.

“Where, where is Love's fond, tender throe,
 With lordly Honor's lofty brow,

The powers you proudly own?
 Is there, beneath Love's noble name,
 Can harbor, dark, the selfish aim,
 To bless himself alone!
 Mark maiden-innocence a prey
 To love-pretending snares,
 This boasted Honor turns away,
 Shunning soft Pity's rising sway,
 Regardless of her tears, and unavailing prayers!
 Perhaps, this hour, in misery's squalid nest,
 She strains your infant to her joyless breast,
 And with a mother's fears shrinks at the rocking blast!

"O ye! who, sunk in beds of down,
 Feel not a want but what yourselves create,
 Think for a moment on his wretched fate,
 Whom friends and fortune quite disown!
 Ill-satisfied keen nature's clamorous call,
 Stretch'd on his straw, he lays himself to sleep,
 While, through the ragged roof and chinky wall,
 Chill o'er his slumbers piles the drift heap!"

"Think on the dungeon's grim confine,
 Where guilt and poor misfortune pine!
 Guilt, erring man, relenting, view;
 But shall thy legal rage pursue
 The wretch, already crush'd low
 By cruel Fortune's undeserv'd blow?
 Affliction's sons are brothers in distress,
 A brother to relieve, how exquisite the bliss!"

I heard nae mair, for chanticleer
 Shook off the pouthery snaw,¹
 And hail'd the morning with a cheer,
 A cottage-rousing crew.

But deep this truth impress'd my mind—
 Through all his works abroad,
 The heart, benevolent and kind,
 The most resembles God.

¹ Flaky snow.

THE LAMENT,

OCCASIONED BY THE UNFORTUNATE ISSUE OF A FRIEND'S AMOUR.

Alas ! how oft does Goodness wound itself,
And sweet Affection prove the spring of woe !—*Home.*

O THOU pale orb, that silent shines,
While care-untroubled mortals sleep !
Thou seest a wretch that inly pines,
And wanders here to wail and weep !
With woe I nightly vigils keep,
Beneath thy wan unwarining beam ;
And mourn in lamentation deep,
How life and love are all a dream.

I joyless view thy rays adorn
The faintly-marked distant hill :
I joyless view thy trembling horn,
Reflected in the gurgling rill :
My fondly fluttering heart, be still !
Thou busy power, Remembrance, cease !
Ah ! must the agonizing thrill
Forever bar returning peace !

No idly-feign'd poetic pains,
My sad love-lorn lamentings claim ;
No shepherd's pipe—Arcadian strains ;
No fabled tortures, quaint and tame :
The plighted faith ; the mutual flame ;
The oft attested Powers above ;
The promised father's tender name—
These were the pledges of my love !

Encircled in her clasping arms,
How have the raptured moments flown !
How have I wish'd for Fortune's charms,
For her dear sake, and hers alone !
And must I think it ! Is she gone,
My secret heart's exulting boast ?
And does she heedless hear my groan ?
And is she ever, ever lost ?

Oh ! can she bear so base a heart,
So lost to honor, lost to truth,

As from the fondest lover part,
The plighted husband of her youth!
Alas! life's path may be unsmooth!
Her way may lie through rough distress!
Then, who her pangs and pains will soothe,
Her sorrows share, and make them less?

Ye wingéd hours that o'er us past,
Enraptured more, the more enjoy'd,
Your dear remembrance in my breast
My fondly treasured thoughts employ'd.
That breast, how dreary now and void,
For her too scanty once of room!
Even every ray of hope destroy'd,
And not a wish to gild the gloom!

The morn that warns the approaching day,
Awakes me up to toil and woe:
I see the hours in long array,
That I must suffer, lingering, slow.
Full many a pang, and many a throe,
Keen recollection's direful train,
Must wing my soul, ere Phœbus, low,
Shall kiss the distant western main.

And when my nightly couch I try,
Sore harass'd out with care and grief,
My toil-beat nerves, and tear-worn eye,
Keep watchings with the nightly thief:
Or, if I slumber, Fancy, chief,
Reigns haggard-wild, in sore affright:
Even day, all-bitter, brings relief
From such a horror-breathing night!

O thou bright queen, who o'er the expanse
Now highest reign'st, with boundless sway!
Oft has thy silent-marking glance
Observed us, fondly-wandering, stray!
The time, unheeded, sped away,
While love's luxurious pulse beat high,
Beneath thy silver-gleaming ray,
To mark the mutual-kindling eye.

Oh! scenes in strong remembrance set!
Scenes never, never, to return!

Scenes, if, in stupor, I forget,
 Again I feel, again I burn :
 From every joy and pleasure torn,
 Life's weary vale I'll wander through :
 And hopeless, comfortless, I'll mourn
 A faithless woman's broken vow.¹

LAMENT.²

Written when the Author was about to leave his native country.

O'ER the mist-shrouded cliffs of the lone mountain straying,
 Where the wild winds of winter incessantly rave,
 What woes wring my heart while intently surveying
 The storm's gloomy path on the breast of the wave !

Ye foam-crested billows, allow me to wail,
 Ere ye toss me afar from my loved native shore ;
 Where the flower which bloom'd sweetest in Coila's green
 vale,
 The pride o' my bosom, my Mary's no more.

No more by the banks of the streamlet we'll wander,
 And smile at the moon's rippled face in the wave ;
 No more shall my arms cling with fondness around her,
 For the dewdrops of morning fall cold on her grave.

Nor more shall the soft thrill of love warm my breast,
 I haste with the storm to a far distant shore ;
 Where unknown, unlamented, my ashes shall rest,
 And joy shall revisit my bosom no more.

LAMENT,

FOR JAMES, EARL OF GLENCAIRN.

THE wind blew hollow frae the hills,
 By fits the sun's departing beam
 Look'd on the fading yellow woods
 That waved o'er Lugar's winding stream :

¹ A detail of the circumstance on which this affecting Poem was composed will be found in Lockhart's *Life of the Poet*, p. 85.

² First published in the *Dumfries Weekly Journal*, July 5th, 1815.

Beneath a craigy steep, a Bard,
 Laden with years and meikle¹ pain,
 In loud lament bewail'd his lord,
 Whom death had all untimely taen.²

He lean'd him to an ancient aik,³
 Whose trunk was mouldering down with years;
 His locks were bleachéd white wi' time,
 His hoary cheek was wet wi' tears!
 And as he touch'd his trembling harp,
 And as he tuned his doleful sang,
 The winds, lamenting thro' their caves,
 To echo bore the notes alang.

"Ye scatter'd birds that faintly sing,
 The relics of the vernal choir!
 Ye woods that shed on a' the winds
 The honors of the agéd year!
 A few short months, and glad and gay,
 Again ye'll charm the ear and e'e;
 But nocht⁴ in all revolving time
 Can gladness bring again to me.

"I am a bending agéd tree,
 That long has stood the wind and rain,
 But now has come a cruel blast,
 And my last hald⁵ of earth is gane:
 Nae leaf o' mine shall greet the spring,
 Nae simmer sun exalt my bloom;
 But I maun lie before the storm,
 And ithers plant them in my room.

"I've seen sae monie changefu' years,
 On earth I am a stranger grown;
 I wander in the ways of men,
 Alike unknowing and unknown:
 Unheard, unpitied, unrelieved,
 I bare alane my lade o' care,
 For silent, low, on beds of dust,
 Lie a' that would my sorrows share.

"And last (the sum of a' my griefs!)
 My noble master lies in clay;

¹ Much.—² Taken.—³ Oak.—⁴ Naught.—⁵ Hold.

The flower amang our barons bold,
His country's pride, his country's stay :
In weary being now I pine,
For a' the life of life is dead,
And hope has left my agéd ken,
On forward wing forever fled.

"Awake thy last sad voice, my harp!
The voice of woe and wild despair!
Awake! resound thy latest lay,
Then sleep in silence evermair!
And thou, my last, best, only friend,
That fillest an untimely tomb,
Accept this tribute from the Bard
Thou brought from Fortune's mirkest¹ gloom.

"In poverty's low barren vale,
Thick mists, obscure, involved me round ;
Tho' oft I turn'd the wistful eye,
Nae ray of fame was to be found :
Thou found'st me like the morning sun
That melts the fogs in limpid air ;
The friendless Bard and rustic song
Became alike thy fostering care.

"Oh! why has worth so short a date?
While villains ripen gray with time,
Must thou, the noble, generous, great,
Fall in bold manhood's hardy prime?
Why did I live to see that day?
A day to me so full of woe!
Oh! had I met the mortal shaft
Which laid my benefactor low!

"The bridegroom may forget the bride
Was made his wedded wife yestreen ;
The monarch may forget the crown
That on his head an hour has been ;
The mother may forget the child
That smiles sae sweetly on her knee ;
But I'll remember thee, Glencairn,
And a' that thou hast done for me!"²

¹ Darkest.—² See note on page 196.

LINES

Sent to Sir John Whitefoord, of Whitefoord, Bart., with the
foregoing Poem.

THOU, who thy honor as thy God rever'st,
Who, save thy mind's reproach, naught earthly fear'st,
To thee this votive offering I impart,
The tearful tribute of a broken heart.
The *friend* thou valued'st, I the *patron* loved;
His worth, his honor, all the world approved.
We'll mourn till we too go as he has gone,
And tread the dreary path to that dark world unknown.

LAMENT OF MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS,

ON THE APPROACH OF SPRING.

Now Nature hangs her mantle green
On every blooming tree,
And spreads her sheets o' daisies white
Out o'er the grassy lea:
Now Phœbus cheers the crystal streams,
And glads the azure skies;
But nocht can glad the weary wight
That fast in durance lies.

Now lav'rocks wake the merry morn,
Aloft on dewy wing;
The merle,¹ in his noontide bower,
Makes woodland echoes ring;
The mavis² mild, wi' many a note,
Sings drowsy day to rest:
In love and freedom they rejoice,
Wi' care nor thrall opprest.

Now blooms the lily by the bank,
The primrose down the brae;
The hawthorn's budding in the glen,
And milk-white is the slae:
The meanest hind in fair Scotland
May rove their sweets amang;

¹ The Blackbird.—² The Thrush.

But I, the Queen of a' Scotland,
Maun' lie in prison strang.²

I was the Queen o' bonnie France,
Where happy I hae been ;
Fu'³ lightly raise I in the morn,
As blythe lay down at e'en :
And I'm the Sovereign of Scotland,
And monie a traitor there :
Yet here I lie in foreign bands,
And never-ending care.

But as for thee, thou false woman,
My sister and my fae,
Grim Vengeance, yet, shall whet a sword
That through thy soul shall gae :
The weeping blood in woman's breast
Was never known to thee ;
Nor th' balm that drops on wounds of woe
Frae woman's pitying e'e.

My son! my son! may kinder stars
Upon thy fortune shine ;
And may those pleasures gild thy reign,
That ne'er wad blink⁴ on mine!
God keep the frae thy mother's faes,
Or turn their hearts to thee ;
And where thou meet'st thy mother's friend,
Remember him for me!

Oh! soon, to me, may summer suns
Nae mair⁵ light up the morn!
Nae mair, to me, the autumn winds
Wave o'er the yellow corn!
And in the narrow house o' death
Let winter round me rave ;
And the next flowers that deck the spring,
Bloom on my peaceful grave!

¹ Must.—² Strong.—³ Full.—⁴ Would shine.—⁵ No more.

EPISTLES.

EPISTLE TO JAMES SMITH.¹

Friendship ! mysterious cement of the soul !
Sweet'ner of life, and solder of society !
I owe thee much.—*Blair.*

DEAR Smith, the sleest,² pawkie³ thief,
That e'er attempted stealth or rief,⁴
Ye surely hae some warlock-breef⁵
Owre human hearts ;
For ne'er a bosom yet was prief⁶
Against your arts.

For me, I swear by sun and moon,
And every star that blinks aboon,
Ye've cost me twenty pair o' shoon
Just gaun to see you ;
And every ither pair that's done,
Mair taen⁷ I'm wi' you.

That auld capricious carlin⁸ Nature,
To mak amends for scrimpit⁹ stature,
She's turn'd you aff, a human creature
On her first plan,
And in her freaks, on every feature,
She's wrote "the man."

Just now I've taen the fit o' rhyme,
My barmy¹⁰ noddle's working prime,
My fancy yerkit¹¹ up sublime
Wi' hasty summon :
Hae ye a leisure-moment's time
To hear what's comin' ?

¹ Then a shopkeeper in Mauchline. He afterwards went to the West Indies, where he died.

² Pronounced *slee-est*, slyest.—³ Cunning.—⁴ Plunder.—⁵ Wizard-spell.—⁶ Proof.—⁷ More delighted.—⁸ A stout old woman.—⁹ Scanty.—¹⁰ Like barm, or yeast.—¹¹ Jerked, lashed.

Some rhyme, a neebor's name to lash ;
 Some rhyme (vain thought!) for needfu' cash ;
 Some rhyme to court the countra clash,¹
 An' raise a din ;
 For me, an aim I never fash !²
 I rhyme for fun.

The star that rules my luckless lot,
 Has fated me the russet coat,
 An' damn'd my fortune to the groat ;³
 But, in requit,
 Has bless'd me wi' a random shot
 O' countra wit.

This while my notion 's taen a sklent,⁴
 To try my fate in guid black prent ;
 But still the mair I'm that way bent,
 Something cries—"Hoolie!"⁵
 I red⁶ you, honest man, tak tent !⁷
 Ye'll shaw your folly.

"There's ither poets, much your better,
 Far seen in Greek, deep men o' letters,
 Hae thought they had insured their debtors
 A' future ages ;
 Now moths deform in shapeless tatters
 Their unknown pages."

Then fareweel hopes o' laurel-boughs,
 To garland my poetic brows !
 Henceforth I'll rove where busy ploughs
 Are whistling thrang,
 And teach the lanely heights an' howes⁸
 My rustic sang.

I'll wander on wi' tentless⁹ heed
 How never-halting moments speed,
 Till fate shall snap the brittle thread ;
 Then, all unknown,
 I'll lay me with th' inglorious dead,
 Forgot and gone !

¹ Country talk.—² To care for.—³ Doomed me to poverty.—⁴ Aslant.—

⁵ Take time and consider.—⁶ Counsel.—⁷ Take heed.—⁸ Hollows, or dales.—

⁹ Thoughtless.

But why o' death begin a tale?
 Just now we're living, sound, and hale,
 Then top and main-top crowd the sail,
 Heave care owre-side!
 And large, before enjoyment's gale,
 Let's tak the tide.

This life, sae far's I understand,
 Is a' enchanted, fairy land,
 Where pleasure is the magic wand,
 That, wielded right,
 Maks hours like minutes, hand in hand,
 Dance by fu' light.

The magic wand then let us wield;
 For, ance¹ that five-an'-forty's spee'd,²
 See crazy, weary, joyless eild,³
 Wi' wrinkled face,
 Come hostin',⁴ hirplin',⁵ owre the field,
 Wi' creepin' pace.

When ance life's day draws near the gloamin',⁶
 Then fareweel vacant careless roamin';
 An' fareweel cheerfu' tankards foamin',
 An' social noise;
 An' fareweel, dear, deluding woman,
 The joy of joys!

O Life! how pleasant in thy morning,
 Young Fancy's rays the hills adorning!
 Cold-pausing Caution's lesson scorning,
 We frisk away,
 Like school-boys at th' expected warning,
 To joy and play.

We wander there, we wander here,
 We eye the rose upon the brier,
 Unmindful that the thorn is near
 Amang the leaves;
 And tho' the puny wound appear,
 Short while it grieves.

¹ Once.—² To climb.—³ Old age.—⁴ Coughing.—⁵ Hobbling.—⁶ Twilight.

Some, lucky, find a flowery spot,
 For which they never toil'd nor swat;¹
 They drink the sweet, and eat the fat,
 But² care or pain;
 And, haply, eye the barren hut
 With high disdain.

With steady aim some fortune chase;
 Keen Hope does every sinew brace;
 Thro' fair, thro' foul, they urge the race,
 And seize the prey;
 Then cannie,³ in some cozie⁴ place,
 They close the day.

And others, like your humble servan',
 Poor wights! nae rules nor roads observin',
 To right or left, eternal swervin',
 They zig-zag on;
 Till curst with age, obscure an' starvin',
 They aften groan.

Alas! what bitter toil an' straining—
 But truce with peevish, poor complaining!
 Is Fortune's fickle *luna* waning?
 E'en let her gang!
 Beneath what light she has remaining
 Let's sing our sang.

My pen I here fling to the door,
 And kneel, "Ye Powers!" and warm implore,
 "Though I should wander *terra* o'er,
 In all her climes,
 Grant me but this, I ask no more,
 Ay rowth⁵ o' rhymes.

"Gie dreeping roasts to countra lairds,
 Till icieles hang frae their beards;
 Gie fine braw claes⁶ to fine life-guards,
 And maids of honor:
 And yill' an' whisky gie to cairds,⁷
 Until they sconner.⁸

"A title, Dempster¹⁰ merits it;
 A garter gie to Willie Pitt;

¹ Did sweat.—² Without.—³ Dexterously.—⁴ Snug.—⁵ Plenty.—⁶ Clothes.
 —⁷ Ale.—⁸ Tinkers.—⁹ Loathe it.—¹⁰ George Dempster, Esq., of Dunnichen.

Gie wealth to some be-ledger'd cit,
 In cent. per cent. ;
 But gie me real, sterling wit,
 And I'm content.

“ While ye are pleased to keep me hale,
 I'll sit down o'er my scanty meal,
 Be 't water-brose¹ or muslin-kail,²
 Wi' cheerfu' face,
 As lang's the Muses dinna fail
 To say the grace.”

An anxious e'e I never throws
 Behint my lug, or by my nose ;
 I jouk³ beneath misfortune's blows
 As weel's I may ;
 Sworn foe to sorrow, care, and prose,
 I rhyme away.

O ye douce⁴ folk that live by rule,
 Grave, tideless-blooded, calm and cool,
 Compared wi' you—O fool! fool! fool!
 How much unlike!
 Your hearts are just a standing pool,
 Your lives, a dyke!

Nae hair-brain'd, sentimental traces
 In your unletter'd, nameless faces!
 In arioso trills and graces
 Ye never stray,
 But, gravissimo, solemn basses
 Ye hum away.

Ye are sae grave, nae doubt ye 're wise ;
 Nae ferly⁵ tho' you dô despise
 The harum-scarum, ram-stam⁶ boys,
 The rattlin' squad :
 I see you upward cast your eyes—
 Ye ken the road.—

Whilst I—but I shall haud me there—
 Wi' you I'll scarce gang onie where—

¹ Made of meal and water only.—² Broth, composed of water, shelled barley, and greens.—³ To stoop.—⁴ Wise.—⁵ With contempt.—⁶ Thoughtless.

Then, Jamie, I shall say nae mair,
 But quit my sang,
 Content wi' you to make a pair,
 Where'er I gang.

TO JOHN LAPRAIK,

AN OLD SCOTTISH BARD.

APRIL 1, 1785.

WHILE briers an' woodbines budding green,
 An' paitricks¹ scraichin' loud at e'en,
 An' morning pousie² whiddin'³ seen,
 Inspire my Muse,
 This freedom in an unknown frien'
 I pray excuse.

On Fasten-e'en⁴ we had a rockin',⁵
 To ca' the crack⁶ and weave the stockin';
 And there was muckle fun an' jockin',
 Ye need nae doubt;
 At length we had a hearty yokin'
 At sang about.

There was ae sang,⁷ amang the rest,
 Aboon them a' it pleased me best,
 That some kind husband had address
 To some sweet wife:

¹ Partridges.—² A hare.—³ Running as a hare does.—⁴ Fastens-even.

⁵ This is a term derived from those primitive times, when the country women employed their leisure hours in spinning on the rock or distaff. This instrument being very portable, was well fitted to accompany its owner to a neighbor's house; hence the phrase of *going a rocking* or *with the rock*. The connection, however, which the phrase had with the implement was forgotten after the rock gave place to the spinning-wheel, and men talked of going a-rocking as well as women. It was at one of these rockings, or social parties, that Mr. Lapraik's song was sung. Burns being informed who was the author, wrote his first epistle to Lapraik; and his second in reply to his answer.

⁶ To call upon some one in the company for a song or a story.

⁷ The song here alluded to was written by Mr. Lapraik after sustaining a considerable pecuniary loss. In consequence of some connection as security for several persons concerned in the failure of the Ayr bank, he was obliged to sell his farm of Dalfram, near Muirkirk. One day, while his wife was fret-

It thirl'd the heart-strings thro' the breast,
A' to the life.

I've scarce heard aught describes sae weel,
What generous, manly bosoms feel;
Thought I, "Can this be Pope, or Steele,
Or Beattie's wark?"
They tauld me 'twas an odd kind chiel'
About Muirkirk.

It pat me fidgin'-fain'² to hear 't,
And sae about him there I spier'³;
Then a' that kent him round declared
He had ingine,⁴
That nane excell'd it, few cam near 't,
It was sae fine.

ting over their misfortunes, he composed it with a view to moderate her grief and fortify her resignation. It is as follows :

When I upon thy bosom lean,
And fondly clasp thee a' my ain,
I glory in the sacred ties
That made us ane, wha ance were twain :
A mutual flame inspires us baith,
The tender look, the melting kiss :
Even years shall ne'er destroy our love,
But only gie us change o' bliss.

Hae I a wish ? it's a' for thee ;
I ken thy wish is me to please ;
Our moments pass sae smooth away,
That numbers on us look and gaze ;
Weel pleased they see our happy days,
Nor Envy's sel finds aught to blame ;
And ay when weary cares arise,
Thy bosom still shall be my hame.

I'll lay me there, and take my rest,
And if that aught disturb my dear,
I'll bid her laugh her cares away,
And beg her not to drap a tear :
Hae I a joy ? it's a' her ain ;
United still her heart and mine ;
They're like the woodbine round the tree,
That's twined till death shall them disjoin.

¹ A droll, good fellow.—² Very anxious.—³ Inquired.—⁴ Possessed of wit and genius.

That, set him to a pint of ale,
 An' either dounce,¹ or merry tale,
 Or rhymes an' sangs he'd made himsel,
 Or witty catches,
 'Tween Inverness and Tiviotdale,
 He had few matches.

Then up I gat, an' swoor an aith,
 Tho' I should pawn my pleugh and graith,²
 Or die a cadger-pownie's³ death,
 At some dyke-back,
 A pint an' gill I'd gie them baith
 To hear your crack.⁴

But, first an' foremost, I should tell,
 Amaist as soon as I could spell
 I to the crambo-jingle⁵ fell,
 Tho' rude an' rough,
 Yet crooning⁶ to a body's sel,
 Does weel enough.

I am nae Poet, in a sense,
 But just a Rhymer, like, by chance,
 An' hae to learning nae pretence,
 Yet, what the matter?
 Whene'er my Muse does on me glance,
 I jingle at her.

Your critic-folk may cock their nose,
 And say, "How can you e'er propose,
 You wha ken hardly verse frae prose,
 To mak a sang?"
 But, by your leaves, my learned foes,
 Ye're may be wrang.

What's a' your jargon o' your schools,
 Your Latin names for horns and stools;
 If honest Nature made you fools,
 What sairs⁷ your grammars?
 Ye'd better taen up spades and shoofs,
 Or knappin'-hammers.

¹ Serious.—² Furniture.—³ A carrier's poney.—⁴ Converse.—⁵ Rhyming.
 —⁶ Humming.—⁷ Serves, what service.

A set o' dull, conceited hashes,¹
 Confuse their brains in college classes!
 They gang in stirks,² and come out asses,
 Plain truth to speak;
 An' syne³ they think to climb Parnassus
 By dint o' Greek!

Gie me ae spark o' Nature's fire,
 That's a' the learning I desire;
 Then tho' I drudge thro' dub⁴ and mire,
 At plough or cart,
 My Muse, tho' hamely in attire,
 May touch the heart.

Oh for a spunk o' Allan's glee,
 Or Fergusson's, the bauld and slee,⁵
 Or bright Lapraik's, my friend to be,
 If I can hit it!
 That would be lear⁶ enough for me,
 If I could get it.

Now, Sir, if ye hae friends enow,
 Tho' real friends, I b'lieve, are few,
 Yet if your catalogue be fu',⁷
 I'se no insist,
 But gif ye want a friend that's true,
 I'm on your list.

I winna blaw⁸ about mysel;
 As ill I like my fauts to tell;
 But friends, and folk that wish me well,
 They sometimes roose⁹ me,
 Tho' I maun own, as monie still
 As sair¹⁰ abuse me.

There's ae wee faut¹¹ they whiles lay to me,
 I like the lasses—Gude forgie me!
 For monie a plack¹² they wheedle frae me!
 At dance or fair;
 Maybe some ither thing they gie me,
 They weel can spare.

¹ Stupid fellows, who know neither how to dress, or to behave with propriety.

² Large calves.—³ Then.—⁴ A pond.—⁵ Sly.—⁶ Learning.—⁷ Full.—

⁸ Will not boast.—⁹ Praise me.—¹⁰ Sore.—¹¹ One small fault.—¹² An old Scotch coin, the third part of a Scotch penny.

But Mauchline race, or Mauchline fair;
 I should be proud to meet you there;
 We 'se gie a night's discharge to care,
 If we forgather,¹
 An' hae a swap o' rhymen'-ware
 Wi' ane anither.

The four-gill chap,² we 'se gar³ him clatter,
 An' kirsen⁴ him wi' reeking water;
 Syne⁵ we 'll sit down an' tak our whitter,⁶
 To cheer our heart;
 An' faith we 'se be acquainted better
 Before we part.

There 's naething like the honest nappy!
 Whaur 'll ye e'er see men sae happy,
 Or women sonsie, saft an' sappy,
 'Tween morn an' morn,
 As them wha like to taste the drappie
 In glass or horn?

I 've seen me daez't' upon a time;
 I scarce could wink or see a styme;
 Just ae half muchkin does me prime,
 Aught less is little,
 Then back I rattle on the rhyme
 As gleg's a whittle!

Awa' ye selfish, warly⁸ race,
 Wha think that havins,⁹ sense, an' grace,
 Even love an' friendship should give place
 To catch the plack!¹⁰
 I dinna like to see your face
 Nor hear your crack.

But ye whom social pleasure charms,
 Whose hearts the tide of kindness warms,
 Who hold your being on the terms—
 "Each aid the others!"
 Come to my bowl, come to my arms,
 My friends, my brothers!

¹ Meet.—² A pot or measure, in which whisky or other spirits was served out to customers at alehouses.

³ Make.—⁴ To christen.—⁵ Then.—⁶ A hearty draught of liquor.—⁷ Stupid.
 —⁸ Worldly.—⁹ Good manners.—¹⁰ To get money.

But to conclude my lang epistle,
 As my auld pen's worn to the grissle;
 Twa lines frae you wad gar me fistle,¹
 Who am most fervent,
 While I can either sing or whissle,
 Your friend and servant.

TO THE SAME.

APRIL 21, 1785.

WHILE new-ca'd kye² rout at the stake,
 An' pownies reek in pleugh or braik,³
 This hour, on e'enin's edge, I take,
 To own I'm debtor
 To honest-hearted, auld Lapraik,
 For his kind letter.

Forjesket⁴ sair, with weary legs,
 Rattlin' the corn out-owre the rigs,
 Or dealing thro' amang the naigs
 Their ten-hours⁵ bite,
 My awkward Muse sair pleads and begs,
 I would na write.

The tapetless⁶ ramfeezl'd' hizzie,
 She's saft at best, and something lazy,
 Quo' she, "Ye ken we've been sae busy,
 This month an' mair,
 That trowth my head is grown right dizzie,
 An' something sair."

Her dowff⁷ excuses pat me mad:
 "Conscience," says I, "ye thowless jad!
 I'll write, an' that a hearty blaud,
 This vera night;
 So dinna ye affront your trade,
 But rhyme it right.

"Shall bauld Lapraik, the king o' hearts,
 Tho' mankind were a pack o' cartes,

¹ Bustle.—² Cows having newly calved.—³ A kind of harrow.—⁴ Jaded with fatigue.—⁵ A slight bate given to horses in the forenoon, while in the yoke.—⁶ Foolish.—⁷ Fatigued.—⁸ Pithless, wanting force.

Roose¹ you sae weel for your deserts,
 In terms sae friendly,
 Yet ye'll neglect to shaw your parts,
 An' thank him kindly!"

Sae I gat paper in a blink,
 An' down gaed stumple in the ink;
 Quoth I, "Before I sleep a wink,
 I vow I'll close it;
 An' if you winna mak it clink,
 By Jove I'll prose it!"

Sae I've begun to scrawl, but whether
 In rhyme or prose, or baith thegither,
 Or some hotch-potch that's rightly neither,
 Let time mak proof;
 But I shall scribble down some blether²
 Just clean aff-loof.³

My worthy friend, ne'er grudge an' carp,
 Tho' Fortune use you hard and sharp;
 Come, kittle up your moorland harp
 Wi' gleesome touch!
 Ne'er mind how Fortune waft and warp;
 She's but a bitch.

She's gien me mony a jirt an' fleg,
 Sin' I could striddle⁴ owre a rig;⁵
 But, by the Lord, tho' I should beg
 Wi' lyart pow,⁶
 I'll laugh an' sing, an' shake my leg
 As lang's I dow!⁷

Now comes the sax-an'-twentieth simmer
 I've seen the bud upo' the timmer,⁸
 Still persecuted by the limmer⁹
 Frae year to year;
 But yet, despite the kittle kimmer,¹⁰
 I, Rob, am here.

Do ye envy the city *gent.*,
 Behind a kist¹¹ to lie and sklent,¹²

¹ Praise, commend.—² Nonsense.—³ Unpremeditated, off-hand.—⁴ Straddle.—⁵ Ridge.—⁶ With gray hairs.—⁷ Can.—⁸ Tree.—⁹ Kept mistress.—¹⁰ Skittish girl.—¹¹ Shop counter.—¹² To look sideways, and cunning.

Or purse-proud, big wi' *cent. per cent.*

And muckle wame,¹

In some bit burgh² to represent

A bailie's name?

Or, is 't the paughty, feudal thane,

Wi' ruffled sark³ an' glancing cane,

Wha thinks himself nae sheep-shank bane,⁴

But lordly stalks,

While caps and bonnets aff are taen,

As by he walks?

"O Thou, wha gies us each good gift!

Gie me o' wit an' sense a lift,

Then turn me, if thou please, adrift,

Thro' Scotland wide;

Wi' cits nor lairds I wadna shift,

In a' their pride!"

Were this the charter of our state—

"On pain of hell be rich and great;"

Damnation then would be our fate,

Beyond remead;⁵

But, thanks to Heaven! that's no the gate⁶

We learn our creed:—

For thus the royal mandate ran,

When first the human race began—

"The social, friendly, honest man,

Whate'er he be,

'Tis he fulfils great Nature's plan,

An' none but he."

O mandate glorious and divine!

The ragged followers of the Nine,

Poor, thoughtless devils! yet may shine

In glorious light,

While sordid sons of Mammon's line

Are dark as night.

Tho' here they scrape, an' squeeze, an' growl,

Their worthless nievefu⁷ of a soul

May in some future carcase howl,

The forest's fright;

¹ Large belly. — ² Small borough. — ³ Shirt. — ⁴ No mean personage. —

⁵ Remedy. — ⁶ The way. — ⁷ Handful.

Or in some day-detesting owl,
 May shun the light.

Then may Lapraik and Burns arise,
 To reach their native, kindred skies,
 And sing their pleasures, hopes, an' joys,
 In some mild sphere,
 Still closer knit in friendship's ties
 Each passing year!

TO THE SAME.

Sept. 13th, 1785.

GUID speed an' furdur to you, Johnie,
 Guid health, hale han's, an' weather bonnie;
 Now when ye 're nickan' down fu' cannie¹
 The staff o' bread,
 May ye ne'er want a stoop³ o' brany
 To clear your head.

May Boreas never thresh your rigs,
 Nor kick your rickles aff their legs,
 Sendin' the stuff o'er muirs an' hagg⁴
 Like drivin' wrack;
 But may the tapmast grain that wags
 Come to the sack.

I'm bizzie⁵ too, an' skelpin'⁶ at it,
 But bitter, daudin showers hae wat it,
 Sae my auld stumpie pen I gat it,
 Wi' muckle wark,
 An' took my jocteleg⁷ an' whatt⁸ it,
 Like ony clerk.

It's now twa month that I'm your debtor,
 For your braw, nameless, dateless letter,
 Abusin' me for harsh ill nature
 On holy men,
 While deil a hair yoursel ye're better,
 But mair profane.

¹ Cutting.—² Dexterous.—³ Jug or dish with a handle.—⁴ Scars or gulfs in mosses.—⁵ Busy.—⁶ Driving or pressing forward.—⁷ A kind of knife.—⁸ To polish by cutting.

But let the kirk-folk ring their bells,
 Let's sing about our noble sels;
 We'll cry nae jads frae heathen hills
 To help, or roose us,
 But browster wives and whiskie stills,
 They are the muses.

Your friendship, Sir, I winna quat¹ it,
 An' if ye mak objections at it,
 Then han' in nieve² some day we'll knot it,
 An' witness take,
 An' when wi' usquabae we've wat it
 It winna break.

But if the beast and branks³ be spared
 Till kye⁴ be gaun⁵ without the herd,
 An' a' the vittel in the yard,
 An' theckit⁶ right,
 I mean your ingle-side to guard
 Ae winter night.

Then muse-inspirin' aqua-vitæ
 Shall make us baith sae blithe an' witty,
 Till ye forget ye're auld an' gatty,⁷
 An' be as canty,⁸
 As ye were nine years less than thretty,
 Sweet ane an' twenty!

But stooks⁹ are cowpet¹⁰ wi' the blast,
 An' now the sun keeks¹¹ in the west,
 Then I maun rin¹² amang the rest
 An' quat my chanter;
 Sae I subscribe mysel in haste,
 Yours, Rab the Ranter.

¹ Quit.—² Hand in hand.—³ A kind of wooden curb.—⁴ Cows.—⁵ Going.
 —⁶ Thatched.—⁷ Infirm.—⁸ Merry.—⁹ Shocks of corn.—¹⁰ Upset.—¹¹ Peeps.
 —¹² Must run.

EPISTLE TO DAVIE,¹

A BROTHER POET.

JAN. —.

WHILE winds frae aff Ben-Lomond blaw,
 And bar the doors wi' driving snaw,
 And hing² us owre the ingle,³
 I set me down to pass the time,
 And spin a verse or twa o' rhyme,
 In hamely westlin⁴ jingle.
 While frosty winds blaw in the drift,
 Ben to the chimla lug,⁵
 I grudge a wee the great folks' gift,
 That live sae bien⁶ and snug:
 I tent' less, and want less
 Their roomy fireside;
 But hanker and canker,
 To see their cursed pride.

It's hardly in a body's power
 To keep, at times, frae being sour,
 To see how things are shared;
 How best o' chiefs⁸ are whiles in want,
 While coofs⁹ on countless thousands rant,
 And ken na how to wair 't:¹⁰
 But, Davie lad, ne'er fash¹¹ your head
 Tho' we hae little gear,
 We're fit to win our daily bread
 As lang's we're hale and fier;¹²
 "Mair spier¹³ na, nor fear na',¹⁴
 Auld age ne'er mind a feg,¹⁵
 The last o' t, the warst o' t,
 Is only for to beg.

To lie in kilns and barns at e'en,
 When banes are crazed and bluid is thin,
 Is, doubtless, great distress!
 Yet then content could make us blest:

¹ David Sillar, author of a volume of Poems in the Scottish dialect.—

² Hang.—³ Fireplace.—⁴ West country.—⁵ The fireside.—⁶ In plenty.—⁷ Heed.

—⁸ Best of men.—⁹ Blockheads.—¹⁰ To spend it.—¹¹ Trouble.—¹² Sound.—

¹³ More ask not.—¹⁴ Ramsay.—¹⁵ Fig.

Even then, sometimes, we'd snatch a taste
Of truest happiness.

The honest heart that's free frae a'

Intended fraud or guile,

However Fortune kick'd the ba',

Has ay some cause to smile :

And mind still, you'll find still,

A comfort this nae sma' ;

Nae mair then, we'll care then,

Nae farther can we fa'.

What tho', like commoners of air,

We wander out, we know not where,

But' either house or hall ?

Yet Nature's charms, the hills and woods,

The sweeping vales and foaming floods,

Are free alike to all.

In days when daisies deck the ground,

And blackbirds whistle clear,

With honest joy our hearts will bound,

To see the coming year :

On braes when we please, then,

We'll sit an' sowth² a tune ;

Syne³ rhyme till 't,⁴ we'll time till 't,

And sing 't when we hae done.

It's no in titles nor in rank ;

It's no in wealth like Lon'on bank,

To purchase peace and rest :

It's no in makin' muckle mair ;⁵

It's no in books ; it's no in lear,

To make us truly blest :

If happiness hae not her seat

And centre in the breast,

We may be wise, or rich, or great,

But never can be blest :

Nae treasures, nor pleasures,

Could make us happy lang ;

The heart ay's the part ay,

That makes us right or wrang.

Think ye, that sic as you and I,

Wha drudge and drive thro' wet an' dry,

¹ Without.—² Hum, or whistle.—³ Then.—⁴ To it.—⁵ Much more.

Wi' never-ceasing toil;
 Think ye, are we less blest than they,
 Wha scarcely tent us in their way,
 As hardly worth their while?
 Alas! how aft in haughty mood,
 God's creatures they oppress!
 Or else, neglecting a' that's good,
 They riot in excess!
 Baith careless and fearless
 Of either heaven or hell!
 Esteeming and deeming
 It's a' an idle tale!

Then let us cheerfu' acquiesce;
 Nor make our scanty pleasures less,
 By pining at our state;
 And even should misfortunes come,
 I, here wha sit, hae met wi' some,
 An' 's thankfu' for them yet.
 They gie the wit o' age to youth;
 They let us ken oursel;
 They make us see the naked truth,
 The real good and ill.
 Tho' losses and crosses
 Be lessons right severe,
 There's wit there, ye'll get there,
 Ye'll find nae other where.

But tent me, Davie, ace o' hearts!
 (To say aught less wad wrang the cartes,
 And flattery I detest,)
 This life has joys for you and I;
 And joys that riches ne'er could buy;
 And joys the very best.
 There's a' the pleasures o' the heart,
 The lover an' the frien';
 Ye hae your Meg, your dearest part,
 And I, my darling Jean!
 It warms me, it charms me,
 To mention but her name:
 It heats me, it beets¹ me,
 And sets me a' on flame!

¹ Adds fuel to fire.

O all ye powers who rule above!
 O Thou, whose very self art love!
 Thou know'st my words sincere!
 The life-blood streaming thro' my heart,
 Or my more dear immortal part,
 Is not more fondly dear!
 When heart-corroding care and grief
 Deprive my soul of rest,
 Her dear idea brings relief
 And solace to my breast.
 Thou Being, all-seeing,
 Oh hear my fervent prayer;
 Still take her, and make her
 Thy most peculiar care!

All hail, ye tender feelings dear!
 The smile of love, the friendly tear,
 The sympathetic glow;
 Long since, this world's thorny ways
 Had number'd out my weary days;
 Had it not been for you!
 Fate still has blest me with a friend,
 In every care and ill;
 And oft a more endearing band,
 A tie more tender still:
 It lightens, it brightens
 The tenebrific¹ scene,
 To meet with and greet with,
 My Davie or my Jean.

Oh, how that name inspires my style!
 The words come skelpin'² rank and file,
 Amaist before I ken!
 The ready measure rins as fine,
 As Phœbus and the famous Nine
 Were glow'rin'³ o'er my pen.
 My spaviet⁴ Pegasus will limp,
 Till ance he's fairly het;⁵
 And then he'll hिल्,⁶ and stilt,⁷ and jimp,⁸
 An' rin an unco fit:⁹

¹ Dark, gloomy.—² Tripping.—³ Looking.—⁴ Having the spavin.—⁵ Heated.
 —⁶ Hobble.—⁷ Limp, or halt.—⁸ Jump.—⁹ Go speedily.

But lest then, the beast then
Should rue this hasty ride,
I'll light now, and dight now,
His sweaty, wizen'd¹ hide.

TO THE SAME.

AULD NEEBOR—

I'M three times doubly o'er your debtor,
For your auld-farrant,³ frien'ly letter;
Tho' I maun say't, I doubt ye flatter,
Ye speak sae fair;
For my puir, silly, rhyming clatter,
Some less maun sair.⁴

Hale be your heart, hale be your fiddle;
Lang may your elbuck⁵ jink⁶ an' diddle,
To cheer you thro' the weary widdle
O' war'ly cares,
Till bairns' bairns' kindly cuddle
Your auld, gray hairs.

But, Davie lad, I'm red⁸ ye're glaikit;⁹
I'm tauld the Muse ye hae negleckit;
An' gif¹⁰ it's sae, ye sud¹¹ be licket¹²
Until ye fyke;¹³
Sic hauns as you sud ne'er be faikit,¹⁴
Be hain't¹⁵ wha like.

For me, I'm on Parnassus' brink,
Rivin' the words to gar them clink;
Whyles dais't¹⁶ wi' love, whyles dais't wi' drink,
Wi' jads¹⁷ or masons;
An' whyles, but ay owre late, I think
Braw sober lessons.

¹ Shrunk, hide-bound.

² This is prefixed to the poems of David Sillar, published at Kilmarnock, 1789.

³ Sagacious.—⁴ Must serve.—⁵ Elbow.—⁶ A sudden turning.—⁷ Children's children.—⁸ Informed.—⁹ Inattentive, foolish.—¹⁰ If.—¹¹ Should.—¹² Licked, beaten.—¹³ Become agitated.—¹⁴ Such hands as you should ne'er be unknown.—¹⁵ Spared, or excused.—¹⁶ Sometimes stupefied.—¹⁷ Women.

Of a' the thoughtless sons o' man,
 Commen' me to the Bardie clan;
 Except it be some idle plan
 O' rhymin' clink,
 The devil-haet,¹ that I sud ban,²
 They ever think.

Nae thought, nae view, nae scheme o' livin',
 Nae cares to gie us joy or grievin';
 But just the pouchie³ put the nieve⁴ in,
 An' while aught's there,
 Then, hiltie, skiltie, we gae scrievin',⁵
 An' fash nae mair.⁶

Leeze me⁷ on rhyme! it's aye a treasure,
 My chief, amaist my only pleasure,
 At hame, a-fiel',⁸ at wark or leisure,
 The Muse, poor hizzie!
 Though rough an' raploch⁹ be her measure,
 She's seldom lazy.

Haud¹⁰ to the Muse, my dainty Davie;
 The warl' may play you monie a shavie;
 But for the Muse, she'll never leave ye,
 Tho' e'er sae puir,
 Na, even tho' limpin' wi' the spavie¹¹
 Frae door to door.

TO MR. WILLIAM TYTLER,

With a portrait of the Author.

EDINBURGH, 1787.

REVERED defender of beauteous Stuart,
 Of Stuart, a name once respected,
 A name, which to love was the mark of a true heart,
 But now 'tis despised and neglected.

Tho' something like moisture conglobes in my eye,
 Let no one misdeem me disloyal;

¹ The devil forbid.—² Swear.—³ Pouch, or purse.—⁴ The hand.—⁵ Dashing away.—⁶ Care for nothing more.—⁷ A phrase of endearment.—⁸ In the field.
 —⁹ Coarse.—¹⁰ Hold.—¹¹ Spavin.

A poor friendless wanderer may well claim a sigh,
Still more if that wanderer were royal.

My fathers that name have revered on a throne;
My fathers have fallen to right it;
Those fathers would spurn their degenerate son,
That name should he scoffingly slight it.

Still in prayers for King George I most heartily join,
The Queen, and the rest of the gentry,
Be they wise, be they foolish, is nothing of mine;
Their title's avow'd by my country.

But why of this epocha make such a fuss,

*	*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	*

But loyalty, truce! we're on dangerous ground,
Who knows how the fashions may alter?
The doctrine to-day that is loyalty sound,
To-morrow may bring us a halter.

I send you a trifle, a head of a Bard,
A trifle scarce worthy your care;
But accept it, good Sir, as a mark of respect;
Sincere as a saint's dying prayer.

Now life's chilly evening dim shades on your eye,
And ushers the long dreary night;
But you, like the star that athwart gilds the sky,
Your course to the latest is bright.

TO WILLIAM SIMPSON, OCHILTREE.

MAY, 1785.

I GAT your letter, winsome Willie;
Wi' gratefu' heart I thank you brawlie;
Tho' I maun say 't, I wad be silly,
And unco vain,
Should I believe, my coaxing billie,
Your flatterin' strain.

But I 'se believe ye kindly meant it,
 I sud¹ be laith² to think ye hinted
 Ironie satire, sidelins³ sklented
 On my poor Musie;
 Tho' in sic phrasin⁴ terms ye 've penn'd it,
 I scarce excuse ye.

My senses wad be in a creel,⁵
 Should I but dare a hope to speel,⁶
 Wi' Allan or wi' Gilbertfield,
 The braes o' fame;
 Or Fergusson, the writer-chiel;
 A deathless name!

(O Fergusson! thy glorious parts
 Ill suited law's dry, musty arts!
 My curse upon your whunstane⁷ hearts,
 Ye E'nburgh⁸ gentry!
 The tithe o' what ye waste at cartes,⁹
 Wad stow'd his pantry!)

Yet when a tale comes i' my head,
 Or lasses gie my heart a screed,¹⁰
 As whyles they 're like to be my dead,¹¹
 (O sad disease!)

I kittle up my rustic reed;
 It gies me ease.

Auld Coila¹² now may fidge fu' fain,¹³
 She 's gotten Poets o' her ain,
 Chiels wha their chanter¹⁴ winna hain,¹⁵
 But tune their lays,
 Till echoes a' resound again
 Her weel-sung praise.

Nae Poet thought her worth his while,
 To set her name in measured style;
 She lay like some unkenn'd-of-isle,
 Beside New Holland,
 Or whare wild-meeting oceans boil
 Besouth Magellan.

¹ Should.—² Loth.—³ Sidelong.—⁴ Flattering.—⁵ A fish-basket.—⁶ To climb.
 —⁷ A hard rocky stone.—⁸ Edinburgh.—⁹ Cards.—¹⁰ A rent.—¹¹ To be my
 death.—¹² From Kyle, a district of Ayrshire.—¹³ Manifest strong symptoms
 of pleasure, or delight.—¹⁴ Part of a bagpipe.—¹⁵ Spare.

Ramsay and famous Fergusson
 Gied Forth and Tay a lift aboon;
 Yarrow an' Tweed, to monie a tune,
 Owre Scotland rings,
 While Irwin, Lugar, Ayr, an' Doon,
 Nae body sings.

Th' Ilissus, Tiber, Thames, an' Seine,
 Glide sweet in monie a tunefu' line!
 But, Willie, set your fit' to mine,
 An' cock your crest,
 We'll gar² our streams and burnies³ shine
 Up wi' the best.

We'll sing auld Coila's plains and fells,⁴
 Her moors red brown wi' heather bells,
 Her banks an' braes, her dens an' dells,
 Where glorious Wallace
 Aft bure the gree,⁵ as story tells,
 Frae Southron billies.⁶

At Wallace' name what Scottish blood
 But boils up in a spring-tide flood!
 Oft have our fearless fathers strode
 By Wallace' side,
 Still pressing onward, red-wat shod,⁷
 Or glorious died.

Oh, sweet are Coila's haughs⁸ an' woods,
 When lintwhites⁹ chant amang the buds,
 And jinking hares, in amorous whids,¹⁰
 Their loves enjoy,
 While thro' the braes the cushat croods¹¹
 Wi' wailfu' cry!

Even winter bleak has charms to me,
 When winds rave thro' the naked tree;
 Or frosts on hills of Ochiltree
 Are hoary gray;
 Or blinding drifts wild furious flee,
 Darkening the day!

¹ Foot.—² Make.—³ Rivers and brooks.—⁴ Fields.—⁵ Obtained the victory.
 —⁶ Englishmen.—⁷ To walk in blood over the shoe-tops.—⁸ Valleys.—⁹ Lin-
 nets.—¹⁰ The motion of a hare in running, when not frightened.—¹¹ The
 dove coos.

O Nature! a' thy shows an' forms
 To feeling, pensive hearts hae charms;
 Whether the summer kindly warms
 Wi' life an' light,
 Or winter howls, in gusty storms,
 The lang, dark night!

The Muse, nae Poet ever fand¹ her,
 Till by himsel' he learn'd to wander,
 Adown some trotting burn's meander,
 And no think lang;²
 Oh, sweet to stray and pensive ponder
 A heart-felt sang!

The warly race may drudge an' drive,
 Hog-shouter,³ jundie,⁴ stretch an' strive,
 Let me fair Nature's face describe,⁵
 And I, wi' pleasure,
 Shall let the busy, grumbling hive
 Bum⁶ owre their treasure.

Fareweel, "my rhyme-composing brither!"
 We've been owre lang unkenn'd⁷ to ither;
 Now let us lay our heads thegither,
 In love fraternal:
 May Envy wallop in a tether,⁸
 Black fiend infernal!

While Highlandmen hate tolls an' taxes;
 While moorlan' herds like guid fat braxies;⁹
 While *terra firma* on her axis
 Diurnal turns,
 Count on a friend, in faith an' practice,
 In ROBERT BURNS.

POSTSCRIPT.

My memory's no worth a preen;¹⁰
 I had amaist forgotten clean,
 You bade me write you what they mean
 By this new-light,¹¹

¹ Found.—² And not think the time long, or be weary.—³ Justle with the shoulder.—⁴ Justle.—⁵ Describe.—⁶ To hum.—⁷ Unknown to each other.—⁸ Struggle as an animal whose tether gets entangled.—⁹ Morbid sheep.—¹⁰ A pin.

¹¹ New-light, a cant phrase in the west of Scotland for those religious opinions which Dr. Taylor, of Norwich, defended so strenuously.

'Bout which our herds sae aft hae been
Maist like to fight.

In days when mankind were but callans¹
At grammar, logic, and sic talents,
They took nae pains their speech to balance,
Or rules to gie,
But spak their thoughts in plain, braid Lallans,²
Like you or me.

In thae³ auld times they thought the moon
Just like a sark,⁴ or pair o' shoon,
Wore by degrees, till her last roon,⁵
Gaed past their viewin',
An' shortly after she was done,
They gat a new one.

This past for certain, undisputed,
It ne'er came i' their heads to doubt it,
Till chiels gat up an' wad confute it,
An' ca'd it wrang;
An' muckle din there was about it,
Bath loud an' lang.

Some herds, weel learn'd upo' the beuk,⁶
Wad threap' auld folk the thing misteuk;
For 'twas the auld moon turn'd a neuk,⁷
An' out o' sight,
An' backlins-comin' to the leuk,
She grew mair bright.

This was denied—it was affirm'd :
The herds and hissels¹⁰ were alarm'd ;
The reverend gray-beards raved an' storm'd,
That beardless laddies
Should think they better were inform'd
Than their auld daddies.

Frae less to mair it gaed to sticks ;
Frae words an' aiths to clours¹¹ an' nicks ;

¹ Boys.—² The Scottish dialect.—³ These.—⁴ A shirt.—⁵ A shred.—⁶ Book.
—⁷ Maintain by dint of assertion.—⁸ Corner.—⁹ Returning.—¹⁰ So many cattle
as one person can attend.—¹¹ A wound occasioned by a blow.

And monie a fallow gat his licks,
 Wi' hearty crunt;¹
 An' some, to learn them for their tricks,
 Were hang'd an' brunt.²

This game was play'd in monie lands,
 An' auld-light caddies³ bure⁴ sic hands,
 That, faith, the youngsters took the sands
 Wi' nimble shanks,
 The lairds forbade, by strict command,
 Sic bluidy pranks.

But new-light herds gat sic a cove,⁵
 Folk thought them ruin'd stick-an'-stowe,⁶
 Till now amaist on every knowe,⁷
 Ye'll find ane placed;
 An' some their new-light fair avow,
 Just quite barefaced.

Nae doubt the auld-light flocks are bleatin';
 Their zealous herds are vex'd an' sweatin';
 Mysel, I've even seen them greetin'⁸
 Wi' girm⁹in⁹ spite,
 To hear the moon sae sadly lied on
 By word an' write.¹⁰

But shortly they will cove the louns!
 Some auld-light herds in neebor towns
 Are mind 't, in things they ca' balloons,
 To tak a flight,
 And stay ae month among the moons
 An' see them right.

Guid observation they will gie them;
 An' when the auld-moon 's gaen to lea'e them,
 The hindmost shaird,¹¹ they'll fetch it wi' them,
 Just i' their pouch,
 An' when the new-light billies¹² see them,
 I think they'll crouch!

¹ A blow on the head with a cudgel.—² Burnt.

³ Literally ticket-porters, or trusty persons who are employed on errands; but the appellation is frequently used in a more general way, and applied to other persons.

⁴ Did bear.—⁵ A fright or beating.—⁶ Altogether.—⁷ Hillock.—⁸ Weeping.—⁹ With rage, or agony of spirit.—¹⁰ Both in conversation and books.—¹¹ A shred.—¹² Brethren.

Sae, ye observe that a' this clatter
 Is naething but a moonshine matter;
 But tho' dull prose-folk Latin splatter
 In logic tulzie,¹
 I hope we bardies ken some better,
 Than mind sic brulzie.²

TO JOHN GOUDIE, KILMARNOCK,

On the publication of his Essays.

O GOUDIE! terror o' the Whigs,
 Dread o' black coats an' reverend wigs,
 Sour Bigotry, on her last legs,
 Girnin³ looks back,
 Wishin' the ten Egyptian plagues
 Wad seize you quick.

Poor gapin', glowrin'⁴ Superstition,
 Waes me! she's in a sad condition;
 Fie! bring Black Jock her state physician
 To see her water!
 Alas! there's ground o' great suspicion
 She'll ne'er get better.

Auld Orthodoxy lang did grapple,
 But now she's got an unco ripple,⁵
 Haste, gie her name up i' the chapel,⁶
 Nigh unto death;
 See how she fetches at the thrapple,
 An' gasps for breath.

Enthusiasm's past redemption,
 Gaen⁷ in a galloping consumption,
 Not a' the quacks wi' a' their gumption⁸
 Will ever mend her,
 Her feeble pulse gies strong presumption
 Death soon will end her.

¹ To quarrel.—² A broil.—³ Twisting the features in agony.—⁴ Staring.—
⁵ Great weakness in the back, or loins.—⁶ That the prayers of the congregation may be offered up in her behalf.—⁷ Going.—⁸ Skill

'Tis you and Taylor¹ are the chief
 Wha are to blame for this mischief;
 But gin² the Lord's ain focks³ gat leave,
 A toom⁴ tar-barrel
 And twa red peats⁵ wad send relief,
 An' end the quarrel.

TO J. RANKINE,

Inclosing some poems.

O ROUGH, rude, ready-witted Rankine,
 The wale⁶ o' cocks for fun and drinkin'!
 There's monie godly folks are thinkin',
 Your dreams⁷ an' tricks
 Will send you, Korah-like, a-sinkin',
 Straught to auld Nick's.

Ye hae sae monie cracks⁸ an' cants,
 And in your wicked, drucken rants,
 Ye mak a devil o' the saunts,
 An' fill them fou;⁹
 And then their failings, flaws, an' wants,
 Are a' seen thro'.

Hypocrisy, in mercy spare it!
 That holy robe, oh dinna tear it,
 Spare't for their sakes wha aften wear it,
 The lads in black;
 But your curst wit, when it comes near it,
 Rives 't¹⁰ aff their back.

Think, wicked sinner, wha ye're skaithing,¹¹
 It's just the blue-gown badge an' claithing
 O' saunts;¹² tak that, ye la'e¹³ them naething
 To ken them by,
 Frae onie unregenerate heathen
 Like you or I.

¹ Dr. Taylor of Norwich.—² If, against.—³ Folk, people.—⁴ Empty.—⁵ Two red-hot turfs, such as are used for fuel.—⁶ Choice.

⁷ A certain humorous dream of his was then making a noise in the country-side.

⁸ Conversation.—⁹ Make them drunk.—¹⁰ Rends.—¹¹ Injuring.—¹² Saints.—¹³ Leave.

I've sent you here some rhyming ware,
 A' that I bargain'd for, an' mair:
 Sae, when you hae an hour to spare,
 I will expect
 Yon sang,¹ ye'll sen 't wi' cannie² care,
 And no neglect.

Tho' faith, sma' heart hae I to sing!
 My Muse dow³ scarcely spread her wing!
 I've play'd mysel a bonnie spring,⁴
 An' danced my fill;
 I'd better gaen an' sair'd⁵ the king
 At Bunker's Hill.

'Twas ae night, lately, in my fun,
 I gaed a-roving wi' the gun,
 An' brought a paitrick⁶ to the grun',⁷
 A bonnie hen,
 An' as the twilight was begun,
 Thought nane wad ken.

The poor wee thing was little hurt;
 I straiкет⁸ it a wee for sport,
 Ne'er thinkin' they wad fash⁹ me for 't;
 But deil-ma-care!
 Somebody tells the poacher-court
 The hale¹⁰ affair.

Some auld-used hands had taen a note,
 That sic a hen had got a shot;
 I was suspected for the plot:
 I scorn'd to lie,
 So gat the whistle o' my grot,¹¹
 An' pay't the fee.

But, by my gun, o' guns the wale,¹²
 An' by my pouter an' my hail,¹³
 An' by my hen, an' by her tail,
 I vow an' swear!
 The game shall pay o'er moor an' dale,
 For this, neist year.

¹ A song he had promised the Author.—² Dexterous.—³ Can, or dare.—

⁴ A Scottish reel.—⁵ Served.—⁶ A partridge.—⁷ Ground.—⁸ Stroked.—

⁹ Trouble.—¹⁰ Whole.—¹¹ I played a losing game.—¹² The choice.—¹³ Shot.

As soon 's the clocking-time¹ is by,
 An' the wee pouts begun to cry,
 Lord, I 'se hae sporting by an' by,
 For my gowd guinea,
 Tho' I should herd the buckskin kye²
 For 't in Virginia.

Trowth, they had muckle for to blame!
 'Twas neither broken wing nor limb,
 But twa-three draps about the wame³
 Scarce thro' the feathers;
 And baith a yellow George to claim,
 An' thole their blethers!⁴

It pits me ay as mad 's a hare;
 So I can rhyme nor write nae mair;
 But pennyworths again is fair,
 When time 's expedient;
 Meanwhile I am, respected sir,
 Your most obedient.

TO THE SAME,

On his writing to the Author that a girl was with child by him.

I AM a keeper of the law
 In some sma' points, altho' not a';
 Some people tell me gin⁵ I fa'
 Ae way or ither,
 The breaking of ae point, tho' sma',
 Breaks a' thegither.

I hae been in for 't ance or twice,
 And winna say o'er far for thrice,
 Yet never met with that surprise
 That broke my rest,
 But now a rumor 's like to rise,
 A whaup⁶ 's i' the nest.

¹ Hatching-time.—² Be transported to America, and made a cow-herd.—

³ Belly.—⁴ Endure their abuse.—⁵ If.—⁶ Curlew.

TO DR. BLACKLOCK.

ELLISLAND, Oct. 21, 1789.

Wow, but your letter made me vauntie!¹
 And are ye hale, and weel, and cantie?²
 I kenn'd it still your wee bit jauntie³

Wad bring ye to:
 Lord send you ay as weel's I want ye,
 And then ye'll do.

The ill-thief blaw the Heron⁴ south!
 And never drink be near his drouth!
 He tald mysel', by word o' mouth,
 He'd tak my letter!

I lippen'd⁵ to the chiel⁶ in trouth,
 And bade nae better.

But aiblins⁷ honest Master Heron
 Had at the time some dainty fair one,
 To wear his theologic care on,
 And holy study;
 An' tired o' sauls to waste his lear⁸ on,
 E'en tried the body.

But what d' ye think, my trusty fier?⁹
 I'm turn'd a gauger—peace be here!
 Parnassian queens, I fear, I fear,
 Ye'll now disdain me,
 And then my fifty pounds a year
 Will little gain me.

Ye glaiket,¹⁰ gleesome, dainty damies,
 Wha by Castalia's wimplin¹¹ streamies,
 Loup, sing, and lave your pretty limbies,
 Ye ken, ye ken,
 That strang necessity supreme is
 'Mang sons o' men.

I hae a wife and twa wee¹² laddies,
 They maun hae brose and brats o' duddies;¹³

¹ Proud.—² Cheerful.—³ Short journey.—⁴ Mr. Heron, author of a History of Scotland, and of various other works.—⁵ Depended.—⁶ Fellow.—⁷ Perhaps.—⁸ Learning.—⁹ Friend.—¹⁰ Inattentive.—¹¹ Meandering.—¹² Little.—¹³ Food and raiment.

Ye ken yoursel my heart right proud is,
 I needna vaunt,
 But I'll sned¹ besoms—thraw saugh woodies,²
 Before they want.

Lord help me thro' this warld o' care!
 I'm weary sick o' t late and air!³
 Not but I hae a richer share
 Than monie ithers;
 But why should ae man better fare,
 And a' men brithers?

Come, Firm Resolve, take thou the van,
 Thou stalk o' carl-hemp in man!
 And let us mind faint heart ne'er wan
 A lady fair:
 Wha does the utmost that he can,
 Will whyles⁴ do mair.

But to conclude my silly rhyme,
 (I'm scant o' verse, and scant o' time,)
 To make a happy fireside clime
 To weans and wife,
 That's the true pathos and sublime
 Of human life.

My compliments to sister Beckie;
 And eke the same to honest Luckie;
 I wat⁵ she is a daintie chuckie,
 As e'er tread clay!
 An' gratefully, my guid auld cockie,
 I'm yours for ay.
 ROBERT BURNS.

TO COLONEL DE PEYSTER.

DUMFRIES, 1796.

My honor'd Colonel, deep I feel
 Your interest in the Poet's weal;
 Ah! now sma' heart hae I to speel⁶
 The steep Parnassus,

¹ Lop, or cut.—² Twist willow ropes.—³ Late and early.—⁴ Sometimes.—
⁵ Know.—⁶ To climb.

Surrounded thus by bolus pill
And potion glasses.

Oh what a cantie¹ warl were it,
Would pain, and care, and sickness spare it;
And Fortune favor worth and merit,
As they deserve;
(And ay a rowth² roast-beef and claret,
Syne³ wha wad starve?)

Dame Life, tho' fiction out may trick her,
And in paste gems and frippery deck her;
Oh! flickering, feeble, and unsicker⁴
I've found her still,
Ay wavering like the willow-wicker,
'Tween good and ill.

Then that curst carmagnoles, auld Satan,
Watches, like baudrans⁵ by a rattan,⁶
Our sinfu' saul to get a claut⁷ on
Wi' felon ire;
Syne, whip! his tail ye'll ne'er cast saut on,
He's aff like fire.

Ah Nick! ah Nick! it is na fair,
First showing us the tempting ware,
Bright wines and bonnie lasses rare,
To put us daft;⁸
Syne weave, unseen, thy spider snare,
O' hell's damn'd waft.

Poor man, the fly, aft bizzes⁹ by,
And aft as chance he comes thee nigh,
Thy auld damn'd elbow yeuks¹⁰ wi' joy,
And hellish pleasure;
Already in thy fancy's eye,
Thy sicker¹¹ treasure.

Soon heels-o'er-gowdie!¹² in he gangs,
And like a sheep-head on a tangs,

¹ Cheerful.—² Plenty.—³ Then.—⁴ Unsteady.—⁵ The cat.—⁶ A rat.—⁷ To get hold of.—⁸ Mad, or off our guard.—⁹ To buzz.

¹⁰ Literally, itches. Some persons manifest a high degree of pleasure by a quick motion of the elbow.

¹¹ Sure.—¹² Topsy-turvy.

Thy girning¹ laugh enjoys his pangs
 And murdering wrestle,
 As dangling in the wind he hangs
 A gibbet's tassel.

But lest you think I am uncivil,
 To plague you with this draunting² drivil,
 Abjuring a' intentions evil,

I quit my pen :

The Lord preserve us frae the Devil !

Amen ! Amen !

TŌ A TAILOR,

In answer to an epistle which he had sent to the Author.

WHAT ails ye now, ye lousie b—ch,
 To thresh my back at sic a pitch ?
 Losh man ! hae mercy wi' your natch,
 Your bodkin 's bauld,
 I did na suffer half sae much
 Frae daddie Auld.

What tho' at times, when I grow crouse,
 I gie their wames a random pouse,
 Is that enough for you to souse
 Your servant sae ?
 Gae mind your seam, ye prick the louse,
 An' jag the flae.

King David, o' poetic brief,
 Wrought 'mang the lasses sic mischief
 As fill'd his after life with grief
 An' bluidy rants,
 An' yet he 's rank'd amang the chief
 O' lang-syne saunts.

¹ Grinning hideously.—² Drawing.

³ This answer to a trimming letter, is omitted in Dr. Currie's edition of the Poems, published for the benefit of the Author's family ; not because he had any doubt that the verses were written by Burns, but because he was of opinion that they were discreditable to his memory—and for the same reason, the editor and commentator, in this edition, has forborne to elucidate what he deems already sufficiently indelicate.

And maybe, Tam, for a' my cants,
 My wicked rhymes, an' drucken rants,
 I'll gie auld cloven Clooty's haunts
 An unco slip yet,
 An' snugly sit amang the saunts,
 At Davie's hip yet.

But fegs, the Session says I maun
 Gae fa' upo' anither plan,
 Than garrin lasses cowp the cran
 Clean heels owre body,
 And sairly thole their mither's ban,
 Afore the howdy.

This leads me on to tell for sport,
 How I did wi' the Session sort—
 Auld Clinkum, at the inner port,
 Cried three times, "Robin!
 Come hither lad, an' answer for 't,
 Ye're blamed for jobbin'!"

Wi' pinch I put a Sunday face on,
 An' snoov'd awa before the Session—
 I made an open, fair confession,
 I scorn to lie;
 And syne Mess John, beyond expression,
 Fell foul o' me.

A fornicator loun he call'd me,
 An' said my faut frae bliss expell'd me;
 I own'd the tale was true he tell'd me;
 "But what the matter,"
 Quo' I, "I fear, unless ye geld me,
 I'll ne'er be better."

"Geld you!" quo' he, "and whatfore no?
 If that your right hand, leg, or toe,
 Should ever prove your spiritual foe,
 You should remember
 To cut it aff, an' whatfore no
 Your dearest member?"

"Na, na," quo' I, "I'm no for that,
 Gelding's nae better than 'tis ca't,
 I'd rather suffer for my faut
 A hearty flewit,

As sair owre hip as ye can draw 't!
 Tho' I should rue it.

"Or gin ye like to end the bother,
 To please us a', I've just ae ither,
 When next wi' yon lass I forgather,
 Whate'er betide it,
 I'll frankly gie her 't a' thegither,
 An' let her guide it!"

But, Sir, this pleased them warst ava,
 And, therefore, Tam, when that I saw,
 I said, "Gude night," and cam awa',
 An' left the Session;
 I saw they were resolv'd a'
 On my oppression.

THE INVENTORY,

In answer to a mandate by Mr. Aikin, Surveyor of the Taxes.

SIR, as your mandate did request,
 I send you here a faithfu' list
 O' gudes an' gear, an' a' my graith,¹
 To which I'm clear to gie my aith.²

Imprimis then, for carriage cattle,
 I have four brutes o' gallant mettle,
 As ever drew afore a pettle.³
 My han'-afore,⁴ a guide auld has been,
 An' wight an' wilfu' a' his days been.
 My han'-ahin⁵'s a weel gaun⁶ fillie,
 That aft has borne me hame frae Killie,⁷
 An' your auld burro', monie a time,
 In days when riding was nae crime.
 But ance when in my wooing pride,
 I, like a blockhead boost⁸ to ride,
 The wilfu' creature sae I pat⁹ to,
 (L—d pardon a' my sins and that too!)
 I play'd my fillie sic a shavie,¹⁰

¹ Tackle.—² Oath.—³ A plough-staff.—⁴ The fore-horse on the left hand in the plough.—⁵ The hindmost horse on the same side.—⁶ Going.—⁷ Kilmar-nock.—⁸ Must needs.—⁹ Put.—¹⁰ Trick, frolic.

She's a' be-devil'd wi' the spavie.¹
 My fur-ahin 's² a wordy³ beast,
 As e'er in tug or tow⁴ was traced.
 The fourth 's a Highland Donald hastie,
 A damn'd red-wud⁵ Kilburnie blastie;⁶
 Forbye⁷ a cowte⁸ o' cowtes the wale,⁹
 As ever ran afore a tail.
 An' he be spared to be a beast,
 He'll draw me fifteen pun'¹⁰ at least.

Wheel-carriages I hae but few,
 Three carts, an' twa are feckly¹¹ new;
 Ae auld wheel-barrow, mair for token,
 Ae leg and baith the trams¹² are broken;
 I made a poker o' the spin'le,
 And my auld mither brunt the trin'le.¹³

For men, I've three mischievous boys,
 Run¹⁴ deils for rantin' an' for noise;
 A gaudsman¹⁵ ane, a thrasher t' other;
 Wee Davock hauds the nowte in fother.¹⁶
 I rule them as I ought, discreetly,
 And aften labor them completely;
 An' ay on Sundays duly nightly,
 I on the Questions tairge¹⁷ them tightly,
 Till, faith, wee Davock 's turn'd sae gleg,¹⁸
 Tho' scarcely langer than your leg,
 He'll screed¹⁹ you aff *Effectual Calling*,
 As fast as onie in the dwelling.

I've nane in female servan' station,
 (Lord keep me ay frae a' temptation!)
 I hae nae wife—and that my bliss is,
 An' ye have laid nae tax on misses;
 An' then if Kirk folks dinna clutch me,
 I ken the devils daur na touch me.

Wi' weans²⁰ I'm mair than weel contented,
 Heaven sent me ane mae²¹ than I wanted.

¹ Spavin.—² The hindmost horse on the right hand in the plough.—
³ Worthy.—⁴ Rope.—⁵ Stark mad.—⁶ A term of contempt.—⁷ Besides.—
⁸ A colt.—⁹ Choice.—¹⁰ Pounds.—¹¹ Partly, nearly.—¹² Handles.—¹³ Burnt
 the wheel.—¹⁴ Right down.—¹⁵ The boy who drives the horses in the plough.
¹⁶ Little David fothers the black cattle.—¹⁷ Examine.—¹⁸ Sharp, ready.—
¹⁹ To repeat any thing fluently.—²⁰ Children.—²¹ One more.

My sonsie,¹ smirking, dear-bought Bess,
 She stares the daddy in her face,
 Enough of aught ye like but grace;
 But her my bonnie, sweet wee lady,
 I've paid enough for her already,
 An' gin² ye tax her or her mither,
 B' the Lord! ye 'se get them a' thegither.

And now remember, Mr. Aikin,
 Nae kind of license out I'm takin';
 Frae this time forth, I do declare,
 I 'se ne'er ride horse nor hizzie³ mair;
 Thro' dirt and dub for life I'll paidle,
 Ere I sae dear pay for a saddle;
 My travel, a' on foot I'll shank it,
 I've sturdy bearers, Gude be thankit.

The Kirk an' you may tak you that,
 It puts but little in your pat;⁴
 Sae dinna put me in your buke
 Nor for my ten white shillings luke.

This list, wi' my ain hand I wrote it,
 Day and date as under notit,
 Then know all ye whom it concerns,
Subscripsi huic ROBERT BURNS.

MOSSGIEL, Feb. 22, 1786.

TO J—S T—T, GL—NC—R.

AULD comrade dear and brither sinner,
 How 's a' the folk about Gl—nc—r?
 How do you this blae eastlin' wind,
 That 's like to blaw a body blind!
 For me my faculties are frozen,
 My dearest member nearly dozen'd.⁵
 I've sent you here, by Johnie Simson,
 Twa sage philosophers to glimpse on;
 Smith, wi' his sympathetic feeling,
 An' Reid, to common sense appealing.

¹ Having a sweet engaging countenance.—² If.—³ Filly, or mare.—⁴ Pot.
 —⁵ Impotent.

Philosophers have fought and wrangled,
 An' meikle¹ Greek an' Latin mangled,
 Till wi' their logic jargon tired,
 An' in the depth of science mired,
 To common sense they now appeal,
 What wives and wabsters² see an' feel.
 But hark ye, friend, I charge you strictly
 Peruse them an' return them quickly;
 For now I'm grown sae curséd douce,³
 I pray an' ponder butt⁴ the house;
 My shins, my lane,⁵ I there sit roasting,
 Perusing Bunyan, Brown, and Boston;
 Till by an' by, if I haud⁶ on,
 I'll grunt a real gospel groan:
 Already I begin to try it,
 To cast my een up like a pyet,⁷
 When, by the gun, she tumbles o'er,
 Fluttering an' gasping in her gore:
 Sae shortly you shall see me bright,
 A burning an' a shining light.

My heart-warm love to guid auld Glen,
 The ace an' wale⁸ of honest men;
 When bending down with auld gray hairs,
 Beneath the load of years and cares,
 May He who made him still support him,
 An' views beyond the grave comfort him:
 His worthy family far and near,
 God bless them a' wi' grace and gear.⁹

My auld school-fellów, preacher Willie,
 The manly tar, my mason Billie,
 An' Auchencray, I wish him joy;
 If he's a parent, lass or boy,
 May he be dad, and Meg the mither,
 Just five-an'-forty years thegither!
 An' no forgetting wabster Charlie,
 I'm tauld he offers very fairly.
 And Lord remember singing Sannock,
 Wi' hale breeks, saxpence, an' a bannock.
 An' next my auld acquaintance Nancy,
 Since she is fitted to her fancy;

¹ Much.—² Weavers.—³ Sober.—⁴ The country kitchen.—⁵ Myself alone.
 —⁶ Hold.—⁷ Magpie.—⁸ Choice.—⁹ Riches.

An' her kind stars hae airted¹ till her
 A guid chiel² wi' a pickle siller.³
 My kindest, best respects I sen' it,
 To cousin Kate and sister Janet;
 Tell them frae me, wi' chieles be cautious,
 For, faith, they'll aiblins⁴ find them fashious;⁵
 To grant a heart is fairly civil,
 But to grant a maidenhead's the devil!
 An' lastly, Jamie, for yoursel,
 May guardian angels tak a spell,
 An' steer you seven miles south o' hell:
 But first, before you see heaven's glory,
 May ye get monie a merry story,
 Monie a laugh, and monie a drink,
 An' ay eneugh o' needfu' clink.

Now fare you weel, an' joy be wi' you:
 For my sake this I beg it o' you,
 Assist poor Simson a' ye can,
 Ye'll find him just an honest man;
 Sae I conclude and quit my chanter,
 Yours, saint or sinner,

ROB THE RANTER.

TO A GENTLEMAN,

Who had sent him a newspaper, and offered to continue it free of expense.

ELLISLAND, 1790.

KIND Sir, I've read your paper through,
 And faith, to me, 'twas really new!
 How guess'd ye, Sir, what maist I wanted?
 This monie a day I've grain'd⁶ and gaunted,
 To ken what French mischief was brewin';
 Or what the drumlie⁷ Dutch were doin';
 That vile doup-skelper,⁸ Emperor Joseph,
 If Venus yet had got his nose off;
 Or how the collieshangie⁹ works
 Atween the Russians and the Turks;

¹ Moved to her; an allusion to the wind shifting to a particular qu-

² Good fellow.—³ A quantity of silver.—⁴ Perhaps.—⁵ Troubles

⁶ Groaned.—⁷ Muddy.—⁸ One who strikes the tail.—⁹ Quarrelling.

Or if the Swede, before he halt,
 Would play anither Charles the Twalt;¹
 If Denmark, any body spak o't!
 Or Poland, wha had now the tack² o't;
 How cut-throat Prussian blades were hingin',³
 How libbet⁴ Italy was singin';
 If Spaniard, Portuguese, or Swiss
 Were sayin' or takin' aught amiss:
 Or how our merry lads at hame,
 In Britain's court keep up the game;
 How Royal George, the Lord leuk o'er him!
 Was managing St. Stephen's quorum;
 If sleekit⁵ Chatham Will⁶ was livin',
 Or glaiket⁷ Charlie⁸ gat his nieve⁹ in:
 How daddie Burke the plea was cookin',
 If Warren Hastings' neck was yeukin';¹⁰
 How cesses, stents,¹¹ and fees were rax'd,¹²
 Or if bare a—s yet were tax'd;
 The news o' princes, dukes, and earls,
 Pimps, sharpers, bawds, and opera-girls;
 If that daft buckie, Geordie Wales,
 Was threshin' still at hizzies' tails,
 Or if he was grown oughtlins doucer,¹³
 And no a perfect kintra cooser:¹⁴
 A' this and mair I never heard of;
 And but for you I might despair'd of;
 So, gratefu', back your news I send you,
 And pray, a' guid things may attend you!

TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.

[A Dedication.]

EXPECT na, Sir, in this narration,
 A fleechin',¹⁵ fletherin',¹⁶ dedication,
 To roose¹⁷ you up, an' ca' you guid,
 An' sprung o' great an' noble bluid,

¹ Twelfth.—² The guiding, or governing of it.—³ Hanging.—⁴ Castrated.—
⁵ Slender.—⁶ William Pitt, son of the Earl of Chatham.—⁷ Thoughtless,
 giddy.—⁸ The celebrated Charles James Fox.—⁹ The fist.—¹⁰ Yoked.—
¹¹ Tribute, dues.—¹² Stretched, increased.—¹³ Wiser.—¹⁴ Country stallion.—
¹⁵ Supplicating.—¹⁶ Flattering.—¹⁷ To praise.

Because ye 're surnamed like His Grace,
 Perhaps related to the race;
 Then when I'm tired—and sae are ye,
 Wi' monie a fulsome, sinfu' lie,
 Set up a face, how I stopt short,
 For fear your modesty be hurt.

This may do—maun' do, Sir, wi' them wha
 Maun please the great folk for a wamefou';²
 For me! sae laigh³ I needna bow,
 For, Lord be thankit, I can plough;
 And when I downa⁴ yoke a naig,
 Then, Lord be thankit, I can beg;
 Sae I shall say, an' that's nae flatt'rin',
 It's just sic Poet an' sic Patron.

The Poet, some guid angel help him,
 Or else, I fear some ill ane skelp⁵ him,
 He may do weel for a' he's done yet,
 But only he's no just begun yet.

The Patron, (Sir, ye maun forgie me,
 I winna lie, come what will o' me,)
 On every hand it will allow'd be,
 He's just nae better than he should be.

I readily and freely grant,
 He downa see a poor man want;
 What's no his ain he winna tak it,
 What ance he says he winna break it;
 Aught he can lend he'll no refuse't,
 Till aft his goodness is abused:
 And rascals whyles that him do wrang,
 E'en that he does not mind it lang;
 As master, landlord, husband, father,
 He does na fail his part in either.

But then, nae thanks to him for a' that;
 Nae godly symptom ye can ca' that;
 It's naething but a milder feature,
 Of our poor, sinfu' corrupt nature:
 Ye'll get the best o' moral works,
 'Mang black Gentoos and pagan Turks,
 Or hunters wild of Ponotaxy,
 Wha never heard of orthodoxy.
 That he's the poor man's friend in need,

¹ Must.—² Bellyful.—³ Low.—⁴ Cannot.—⁵ To strike.

The gentleman in word and deed,
It's no thro' terror of damnation :
It's just a carnal inclination.

Morality ! thou deadly bane,
Thy tens o' thousands thou hast slain !
Vain is his hope, whose stay and trust is
In moral mercy, truth, and justice !

No—stretch a point to catch a plack ;
Abuse a brother to his back ;
Steal thro' a winnock¹ frae a whore,
But point the rake that takes the door ;
Be to the poor like onie whunstone,²
And haud their noses to the grunstone ;³
Ply every art o' legal thieving ;
No matter—stick to sound believing.

Learn three-mile prayers, and half-mile graces,
Wi' weel-spread looves,⁴ an' lang wry faces,
Grun up a solemn, lengthen'd groan,
And damn a' parties but your own ;
I'll warrant then, ye're nae deceiver,
A steady, sturdy, stanch believer.

O ye wha leave the springs of Calvin,
For gumlie⁵ dubs⁶ of your ain delvin' !
Ye sons of heresy and error,
Ye'll some day squeel⁷ in quakin' terror !
When Vengeance draws the sword in wrath,
And in the fire throws the sheath ;
When Ruin with his sweeping besom,
Just frets till Heaven commission gies him :
While o'er the harp pale Misery moans,
And strikes the ever-deepening tones,
Still louder shrieks, and heavier groans !

Your pardon, Sir, for this digression,
I maist⁸ forgat my dedication !
But when divinity comes 'cross me,
My readers still are sure to lose me.

So, Sir, ye see 'twas nae daft⁹ vapor,
But I maturely thought it proper,
When a' my works I did review,
To dedicate them, Sir, to You ;

¹ Window.—² A hard rock stone.—³ Grindstone.—⁴ Hands.—⁵ Muddy,—
⁶ A small pond.—⁷ Scream.—⁸ Almost.—⁹ Foolish.

Because (ye needna tak it ill)
 I thought them something like yoursel.
 Then patronize them wi' your favor,
 And your petitioner shall ever—
 I had amaist said, *ever pray*,
 But that's a word I needna say:
 For prayin' I hae little skill o't;
 I'm baith dead-sweer¹ an' wretched ill o't;
 But I'se repeat each poor man's prayer,
 That kens or hears about you, Sir:—

“May ne'er misfortune's growling bark
 Howl thro' the dwelling o' the Clerk!
 May ne'er his generous, honest heart,
 For that same generous spirit smart:
 May Kennedy's far-honor'd fame,
 Lang beet² his hymeneal flame,
 Till Hamiltons, at least a dizèn,
 Are frae their nuptial labors risen:
 Five bonnie lasses round their table,
 And seven braw fellows, stout an' able
 To serve their king and country weel,
 By word, or pen, or pointed steel!
 May health and peace, with mutual rays,
 Shine on the evening o' his days;
 Till his wee curlie John's ier-oe,³
 When ebbing life nae mair shall flow,
 The last, sad mournful rites bestow!”

I will not wind a lang conclusion,
 Wi' complimentary effusion:
 But whilst your wishes and endeavors
 Are blest wi' Fortune's smiles and favors,
 I am, dear Sir, with zeal most fervent,
 Your much indebted, humble servant.

But if (which Powers above prevent!)
 That iron-hearted carl, Want,
 Attended in his grim advances,
 By sad mistakes and black mischances,
 While hopes, and joys, and pleasures fly him,
 Make you as poor a dog as I am,
 Your humble servant then no more;
 For who would humbly serve the poor?

¹ Averse.—² Add fuel to.—³ Great-grandchild.

But, by a poor man's hopes in Heaven!
 While recollection's power is given,
 If, in the vale of humble life,
 The victim sad of Fortune's strife,
 I, thro' the tender gushing tear,
 Should recognize my master dear,
 If, friendless, low, we meet together,
 Then, Sir, your hand—my friend and brother!

TO THE SAME,

(Recommending a boy.)

MOSGAVILLE, May 3, 1796.

I HOLD it, Sir, my bounden duty
 To warn you how that Master Tootie,
 Alias, Laird M'Gaun,¹
 Was here to hire yon lad away
 'Bout whom ye spak the tither day,
 An' wad hae done 't aff han':²
 But lest he learn the callan³ tricks,
 As faith I muckle doubt him,
 Like scrapin' out auld crummie's⁴ nicks,
 An' tellin' lies about them;
 As lieve⁵ then I'd have then,
 Your clerkship he should sair,⁶
 If sae be, ye may be
 Not fitted otherwhere.

Altho' I say 't, he's gleg⁷ enough,
 An' bout a house that's rude an' rough,
 The boy might learn to swear;
 But then wi' you, he'll be sae taught,
 An' get sic fair example straught,
 I hae na ony fear.
 Ye'll catechise him every quirk,
 An' shore⁸ him weel wi' hell;

¹ Master Tootie then lived in Mauchline; a dealer in cows. It was his common practice to cut the nicks or markings from the horns of cattle, to disguise their age. He was an artful, trick-contriving character; hence he is called a *snick-drawer*. In the Poet's "Address to the Deil," he styles that august personage an *auld, snick-drawing dog!*—*Reliques*, p. 397.

² Off hand.—³ Boy.—⁴ Old cow.—⁵ Rather.—⁶ Serve.—⁷ Sharp.—⁸ Threaten.

An' gar him follow to the kirk——
 —Ay when ye gang yoursel.
 If ye then, maun be then
 Frae hame this comin' Friday,
 Then please, Sir, to lea'e, Sir,
 The orders wi' your lady.

My word of honor I hae gien,
 In Paisley John's, that night at e'en,
 To meet the Warld's worm;
 To try to get the twa to gree,¹
 An' name the airles² an' the fee,
 In legal mode an' form:
 I ken he weel a snick can draw,
 When simple bodies let him;
 An' if a Devil be at a',
 In faith he's sure to get him.
 To phrase you an' praise you,
 Ye ken your Laureat scorns:
 The prayer still, you share still,
 Of grateful Minstrèl Burns.

TO ROBERT GRAHAM, ESQ., OF FINTRA.

WHEN Nature her great master-piece design'd,
 And framed her last, best work, the human mind,
 Her eye intent on all the mazy plan,
 She form'd of various parts the various man.
 Then first she calls the useful many forth:
 Plain, plodding industry, and sober worth:
 Thence peasants, farmers, native sons of earth,
 And merchandise' whole genus take their birth.
 Each prudent cit a warm existence finds,
 And all mechanics' many-apron'd kinds.
 Some other rarer sorts are wanted yet,
 The lead and buoy are needful to the net:
 The *caput mortuum* of gross desires
 Makes a material for mere knights and squires;
 The martial phosphorus is taught to flow,
 She kneads the lumpish, philosophic dough,

¹ Agree.—² Earnest money.

Then marks the unyielding mass with grave designs,
 Law, physic, politics, and deep divines:
 Last, she sublimes the Aurora of the poles,
 The flashing elements of female souls.

The order'd system fair before her stood,
 Nature, well-pleased, pronounced it very good;
 But here she gave creating labor o'er,
 Half-jest, she tried one curious labor more.
 Some spumy, fiery *ignis fatuus* matter;
 Such as the slightest breath of air might scatter;
 With arch-alacrity and conscious glee
 (Nature may have her whim as well as we,
 Her Hogarth-art perhaps she meant to show it)
 She forms the thing, and christens it—a Poet.
 Creature, tho' oft the prey of care and sorrow,
 When blest to-day unmindful of to-morrow.
 A being form'd to amuse his graver friends,
 Admired and praised—and there the homage ends;
 A mortal quite unfit for Fortune's strife,
 Yet oft the sport of all the ills of life;
 Prone to enjoy each pleasure riches give,
 Yet haply wanting wherewithal to live;
 Longing to wipe each tear, to heal each groan,
 Yet frequent all unheeded in his own.

But honest Nature is not quite a Turk;
 She laugh'd at first, then felt for her poor work:
 Pitying the propless climber of mankind,
 She cast about a standard-tree to find;
 And, to support his helpless woodbine state,
 Attach'd him to the generous truly great—
 A title, and the only one I claim,
 To lay strong hold for help on bounteous Graham.

Pity the tuneful Muses' hapless train,
 Weak, timid landsmen on life's stormy main!
 Their hearts no selfish, stern, absorbent stuff,
 That never gives—though humbly takes enough;
 The little fate allows, they share as soon,
 Unlike sage, proverb'd Wisdom's hard-wrung boon.
 The world were blest did bliss on them depend:
 Ah! that the friendly e'er should want a friend!
 Let prudence number o'er each sturdy son,
 Who life and wisdom at one race begun,
 Who feel by reason, and who give by rule,

(Instinct's a brute, and sentiment a fool!)
Who make poor *will do* wait upon *I should*—
We own they're prudent; but who feels they're good?
Ye wise ones, hence! ye hurt the social eye!
God's image rudely etch'd on base alloy!
But come, ye who the godlike pleasure know—
Heaven's attribute distinguish'd—to bestow!
Whose arms of love would grasp the human race:
Come, thou who giv'st with all the courtier's grace,
Friend of my life, true patron of my rhymes!
Prop of my dearest hopes for future times.
Why shrinks my soul half-blushing, half-afraid,
Backward, abash'd to ask thy friendly aid?
I know my need, I know thy giving hand,
I crave thy friendship at thy kind command;
But there are such who court the tuneful nine—
Heavens! should the branded character be mine!
Whose verse in manhood's pride sublimely flows,
Yet vilest reptiles in their begging prose.
Mark, how their lofty, independent spirit
Soars on the spurning wing of injured merit!
Seek not the proofs in private life to find;
Pity the best of words should be but wind!
So to heaven's gates the lark's shrill song ascends,
But grovelling on the earth the carol ends.
In all the clamorous cry of starving want,
They dun benevolence with shameless front:
Oblige them, patronize their tinsel lays,
They persecute you all your future days!
Ere my poor soul such deep damnation stain,
My horny fist assume the plough again;
The piebald jacket let me patch once more:
On eighteen-pence a-week I've lived before.
Though, thanks to Heaven, I dare even that last shift,
I trust, meantime, my boon is in thy gift:
That placed by thee upon the wish'd-for height,
Where, Man and Nature fairer in her sight,
My Muse may imp her wing for some sublimer flight.

TO THE SAME.

LATE crippled of an arm, and now a leg,
 About to beg a pass for leave to beg;
 Dull, listless, teased, dejected, and deprest,
 (Nature is adverse to a cripple's rest;)
 Will generous Graham list to his Poet's wail?
 (It soothes poor Misery hearkening to her tale)
 And hear him curse the light he first survey'd,
 And doubly curse the luckless rhyming trade?
 Thou, Nature, partial Nature, I arraign;
 Of thy caprice maternal I complain.
 The lion and the bull thy care have found,
 One shakes the forest, and one spurns the ground:
 Thou giv'st the ass his hide, the snail his shell,
 The envenom'd wasp, victorious, guards his cell.
 Thy minions, kings, defend, control, devour,
 In all the omnipotence of rule and power.
 Foxes and statesmen, subtle wiles insure;
 The cit and polecat stink, and are secure.
 Toads with their poison, doctors with their drug,
 The priest and hedgehog in their robes are snug.
 Even silly woman has her warlike arts,
 Her tongue and eyes, her dreaded spear and darts.
 But oh! thou bitter step-mother and hard,
 To thy poor, fenceless, naked child—the Bard!
 A thing unteachable in world's skill,
 And half an idiot too, more helpless still.
 No heels to bear him from the opening dun;
 No claws to dig, his hated sight to shun;
 No horns, but those by luckless Hymen worn,
 And those, alas! not Amalthea's horn:
 No nerves olfact'ry, Mammon's trusty cur,
 Clad in rich Dulness' comfortable fur,
 In naked feeling, and in aching pride,
 He bears the unbroken blast from every side:
 Vampyre booksellers drain him to the heart,
 And scorpion critics cureless venom dart.
 Critics! appall'd, I venture on the name,
 Those cut-throat bandits in the paths of fame;
 Bloody dissectors, worse than ten Monroes;
 He hacks to teach, they mangle to expose.

His heart by causeless, wanton malice wrung,
By blockheads' daring into madness stung;
His well-won bays, than life itself more dear,
By miscreants torn, who ne'er one sprig must wear.
Foil'd, bleeding, tortured, in the unequal strife,
The hapless Poet flounders on through life.
Till fled each hope that once his bosom fired,
And fled each Muse that glorious once inspired,
Low sunk in squalid, unprotected age,
Dead, even resentment, for his injured page,
He heeds or feels no more the ruthless critic's rage!

So, by some hedge, the generous steed deceased,
For half-starved, snarling curs a dainty feast;
By toil and famine wore to skin and bone,
Lies senseless of each tugging bitch's son.

O Dulness! portion of the truly blest!
Calm shelter'd haven of eternal rest!
Thy sons ne'er madden in the fierce extremes
Of Fortune's polar frost, or torrid beams.
If mantling high she fills the golden cup,
With sober, selfish ease they sip it up:
Conscious the bounteous meed they well deserve,
They only wonder some folks do not starve.
The grave, sage hern thus easy picks his frog,
And thinks the mallard a sad worthless dog.
When Disappointment snaps the clue of hope,
And through disastrous night they darkling grope,
With deaf endurance sluggishly they bear,
And just conclude that fools are Fortune's care.
So, heavy, passive to the tempest's shocks,
Strong on the sign-post stands the stupid ox.

Not so the idle Muses' mad-cap train,
Not such the workings of their moon-struck brain;
In equanimity they never dwell,
By turns in soaring heaven or vaulted hell.

I dread thee, Fate, relentless and severe,
With all a poet's, husband's, father's fear!
Already one strong hold of hope is lost,
Glencairn, the truly noble, lies in dust;
(Fled, like the sun eclipsed at noon appears,
And left us darkling in a world of tears:)
Oh! hear my ardent, grateful, selfish prayer!
Fintra, my other stay, long bless and spare!

Thro' a long life his hopes and wishes crown;
 And bright in cloudless skies his sun go down:
 May bliss domestic smooth his private path;
 Give energy to life; and soothe his latest breath,
 With many a filial tear circling the bed of death!

TO THE SAME,

ON RECEIVING A FAVOR.

I CALL no goddess to inspire my strains,
 A fabled muse may suit a bard that feigns;
 Friend of my life! my ardent spirit burns,
 And all the tribute of my heart returns,
 For boons accorded, goodness ever new,
 The gift still dearer, as the giver you.

Thou orb of day! thou other paler light!
 And all ye many sparkling stars of night!
 If aught that giver from my mind efface;
 If I that giver's bounty e'er disgrace;
 Then roll to me, along your wandering spheres,
 Only to number out a villain's years!

TO MRS. DUNLOP,

ON NEW-YEAR'S DAY.

THIS day, Time winds the exhausted chain,
 To run the twelvemonth's length again:
 I see the old bald-pated fellow,
 With ardent eyes, complexion sallow,
 Adjust the unimpair'd machine,
 To wheel the equal, dull routine.

The absent lover, minor heir,
 In vain assail him with their prayer;
 Deaf as my friend, he sees them press,
 Nor makes the hour one moment less.

Will you (the Major's with the hounds,
 The happy tenants share his rounds;
 Coila's fair Rachel's care to-day,¹

¹ This young lady was drawing a picture of Coila, from the "Vision."

And blooming Keith's engaged with Gray)
From housewife cares a minute borrow,
(That grandchild's cap will do to-morrow)
And join with me a-moralizing?
This day's propitious to be wise in.

First, what did yesternight deliver?
"Another year is gone forever."
And what is this day's strong suggestion?
"The passing moment's all we rest on!"
Rest on—for what? what do we here?
Or why regard the passing year?
Will Time, amused with proverb'd lore,
Add to our date one minute more?
A few days may—a few years must—
Repose us in the silent dust.
Then is it wise to damp our bliss?
Yes—all such reasonings are amiss!
The voice of nature loudly cries,
And many a message from the skies,
That something in us never dies;
That on this frail uncertain state,
Hang matters of eternal weight;
That future life, in worlds unknown,
Must take its hue from this alone;
Whether as heavenly glory bright,
Or dark as misery's woeful night.

Since, then, my honor'd first of friends,
On this poor being all depends;
Let us the important *now* employ,
And live as those that never die.

Tho' you, with days and honors crown'd,
Witness that filial circle round,
(A sight life's sorrows to repulse,
A sight pale envy to convulse,)
Others now claim your chief regard;
Yourself, you wait your bright reward.

TO THE SAME,

ON SENSIBILITY.

SENSIBILITY, how charming,
 Thou, my friend, canst truly tell;
 But distress with horrors arming,
 Thou hast also known too well;

Fairest flower, behold the lily,
 Blooming in the sunny ray:
 Let the blast sweep o'er the valley;
 See it prostrate on the clay.

Hear the wood-lark charm the forest,
 Telling o'er his little joys:
 Hapless bird! a prey the surest,
 To each pirate of the skies.

Dearly bought the hidden treasure
 Finer feelings can bestow;
 Chords that vibrate sweetest pleasure,
 Thrill the deepest notes of woe!

TO A YOUNG FRIEND.¹

MAY, 1786.

I LANG hae thought, my youthfu' friend,
 A something to have sent you,
 Tho' it should serve nae other end
 Than just a kind memento.
 But how the subject-theme may gang,
 Let time and chance determine;
 Perhaps it may turn out a sang,
 Perhaps turn out a sermon.

Ye'll try the world soon, my lad,
 And, Andrew dear, believe me,
 Ye'll find mankind an unco² squad,
 And muckle they may grieve ye:

¹ Mr. A. A. Aikin, now of Liverpool, the son of Robert Aikin, Esq.—² Uncouth, untoward.

For care and trouble set your thought,
 E'en when your end 's attain'd;
 And a' your views may come to naught,
 When every nerve is strain'd.

I'll no say, men are villains a';
 The real, harden'd wicked,
 Wha hae nae check but human law,
 Are to a few restricted:¹
 But, och! mankind are unco² weak,
 An' little to be trusted;
 If self the wavering balance shake,
 It's rarely right adjusted!

Yet they wha fa' in Fortune's strife,
 Their fate we should na censure,
 For still the important end of life,
 They equally may answer:
 A man may hae an honest heart,
 Tho' poortith³ hourly stare him;
 A man may tak a neebor's part,
 Yet hae nae cash to spare him.

Ay free aff han' your story tell,
 When wi' a bosom cronie:
 But still keep something to yoursel
 Ye scarcely tell to onie.
 Conceal yoursel as weel 's ye can,
 Frae critical dissection;
 But keek⁴ thro' every other man,
 Wi' sharpen'd sly inspection.

The sacred lowe⁵ o' weel-placed love,
 Luxuriantly indulge it:
 But never tempt the illicit rove,
 Tho' naething should divulge it:
 I wave the quantum o' the sin,
 The hazard of concealing;
 But, och! it hardens a' within,
 And petrifies the feeling!

¹ Restricted. In the use of this word, in common with many other English words, Burns has perhaps taken more than a poet's liberty with the orthography, in order to accommodate his rhyme.

² Very.—³ Poverty.—⁴ Peep into, or scrutinize.—⁵ Flame.

To catch dame Fortune's golden smile,
 Assiduous wait upon her;
 And gather gear by every wile
 That's justified by honor:
 Not for to hide it in a hedge,
 Nor for a train-attendant;
 But for the glorious privilege
 Of being independent.

The fear o' hell 's a hangman's whip
 To haud the wretch in order;
 But where ye feel your honor grip,¹
 Let ay that be your border:
 Its slightest touches, instant pause—
 Debar a' side pretences;
 And resolutely keep its laws,
 Uncaring consequences.

The great Creator to-revere,
 Must sure become the creature;
 But still the preaching cant forbear,
 And even the rigid feature:
 Yet ne'er with wits profane to range,
 Be complaisance extended;
 An atheist's laugh 's a poor exchange
 For Deity offended!

When ranting round in pleasure's ring,
 Religion may be blinded;
 Or if she gie a random sting,
 It may be little minded:
 But when on life we're tempest driven,
 A conscience but a canker—
 A correspondence fix'd wi' Heaven,
 Is sure a noble anchor.

Adieu, dear, amiable youth!
 Your heart can ne'er be wanting;
 May prudence, fortitude, and truth
 Erect your brow undaunting!
 In ploughman phrase, "God send you speed,"
 Still daily to grow wiser!
 And may you better reck the rede,²
 Than ever did the adviser!

¹ Pinch.—² Take heed, or pay due attention to good advice.

(The second sight, ye ken, is given
 To ilka poet,)
 On thee a tack o' seven times seven
 Will yet bestow it.

If envious buckies view wi' sorrow,
 Thy lengthen'd days on this blest morrow,
 May desolation's lang-teeth'd harrow,
 Nine miles an hour,
 Rake them like Sodom and Gomorrah,
 In brunstane stoure.¹

But for thy friends, and they are monie,
 Baith honest men and lasses bonnie,
 May couthie² fortune, kind and cannie,
 In social glee,
 Wi' mornings blythe and e'enings funny,
 Bless them and thee!

Fareweel, auld birkie!³ Lord be near ye,
 And then the Deil he daur na steer⁴ ye:
 Your friends ay love, your faes ay fear ye;
 For me, shame fa' me,
 If neist⁵ my heart I dinna wear ye,
 While BURNS they ca' me.

TO CAPTAIN RIDDEL, GLENRIDDEL.

(Extempore lines on returning a newspaper.)

ELLISLAND, *Monday Evening.*

YOUR news and review, Sir, I've read through and
 through, Sir,
 With little admiring or blaming;
 The papers are barren of home news or foreign,
 No murders or rapes worth the naming.
 Our friends the reviewers, those chippers and hewers,
 Are judges of mortar and stone, Sir;
 But of meet, or unmeet, in a fabric complete,
 I'll boldly pronounce they are none, Sir.

¹ Brimstone dust.—² Loving.—³ Clever fellow.—⁴ Dare not molest.—⁵ Next.